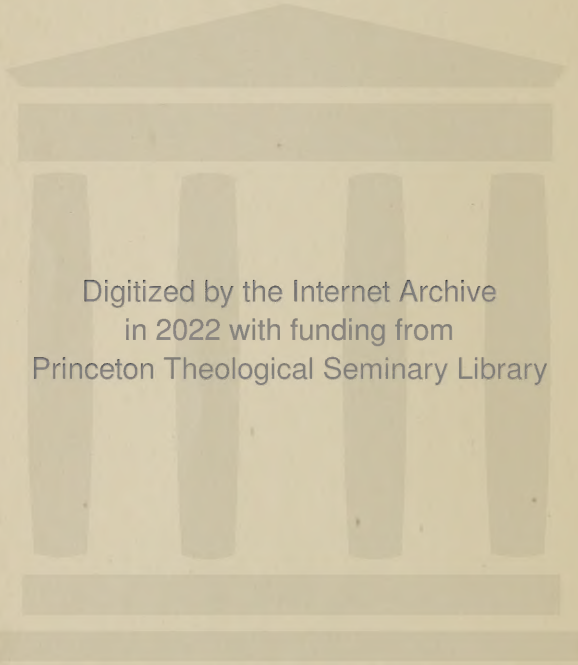






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Sufficient ministers





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THE OLD FAITH IN THE NEW DAY

THE CONTEMPORARY CHRIST

AN ADVENTURE IN ORTHODOXY

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# SUFFICIENT MINISTERS

BY  
JOSEPH M. M. GRAY

Introduction by  
BISHOP WILLIAM F. McDOWELL



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## FOREWORD

THE Matthew Simpson Lectureship on "The Christian Ministry" was established in DePauw University for the purpose of setting forth in its true light the vocation of the preacher. The Matthew Simpson Foundation provides for bringing to the University every year a preacher of distinction to interpret the task of the Christian minister to college men. This series of lectures by the Reverend Joseph M. M. Gray, D.D., Litt.D., on SUFFICIENT MINISTERS is a noble memorial to Bishop Matthew Simpson, prince among American preachers, and first president of DePauw University. Among all the books that have appeared recently on preaching, none gives a finer portrayal of the power and dignity of the pulpit than Doctor Gray has given in this volume.

This book sets the modern prophet of God in his true light as the interpreter of spiritual things in the vernacular of his own age, as the inspiring genius of the great social movements, as the commanding voice crying in the wilderness of confused public opinion, evermore revealing the mind of Christ to the mind of the world. It will meet most effectively the

cheap and vociferous criticism that is being heaped upon the Christian minister and the church. The reading of these lectures will breathe new hope into many a discouraged preacher who has lost the sense of the greatness and dignity of his calling. Doctor Gray has revealed to us the minister of the gospel not as a frocked ecclesiastic on a pedestal, not as a parish priest busy with small matters, nor yet as a religious dabbler in social and civic affairs, but as a man among men, interpreting eternal things with a clear mind, spiritual insight, a burning heart, and moral fearlessness, so that through the preacher the people still hear the "Thus saith the Lord."

The previous lecturers on this foundation were Bishop Francis J. McConnell, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Reverend Doctor Charles E. Jefferson, of Broadway Tabernacle Congregational Church, New York City.

GEORGE R. GROSE.

## INTRODUCTION

HERE is a preacher who heartily believes in preaching. He takes with a noble seriousness the high task and privilege of being a preacher of Christ. He regards the history of preaching with a proper pride and its present opportunity as an inspiring challenge. He knows full well the weaknesses and imperfections of the ministry, past and present, and does not conceal the actual facts from his own or any other eyes. He is sensitively aware how frail is the earthen vessel in which the treasure of preaching is carried, but his eye is always on the treasure, his rapture always on the transcending power of God, so that in spite of the earthen character of the vessel and the weakness of the preacher himself, he "never loses heart in this ministry which by God's mercy he holds" (Moffatt). And in this volume of lectures spoken on a foundation established in memory of Matthew Simpson this modern preacher has nobly pictured *The Preacher in American History and Life*, *The Preacher as the Interpreter of His Age*, *The Preacher in the Direction of Social Reform*, *The Preacher and the Creation of*

Public Opinion, and The Preacher and the Present Hour. And in all these pages one sees flashes of revealing light from the lives and spirits of those who have "kept the soul of the world alive" through pioneer days when the republic was in its early making down to this hour when it is in its later and probably its more critical period. But one also sees all the time those significant revelations of the lecturer's own ideals and spirit, insights and purposes which make his own ministry in our own times. So that the volume becomes, as any real lectures on preaching must always become, a genuinely human document and not an abstract study.

Any book that causes the fire of true preaching to burn afresh is good, especially good in these times when so many forces and influences work against preaching and the preacher; when so many voices are even saying that the day of the preacher is passing, if not already past. Of course the ministry always has to face adverse conditions, and is always the subject of gloomy predictions. Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, in his volume *Some Living Masters of the Pulpit*, reminds us that when Professor Mahaffey wrote his volume on *The Decay of Modern Preaching*, "Parker, Liddon, Spurgeon, McLaren, Beecher, Brooks,

Broadus and Simpson were in the full splendor of their powers." He might have added many other names to that list. But we may well be grateful to those ministers in every period who by their books, or by their ministries, or both, do keep the glorious glow upon preaching and the way it is regarded in the world. I think in one of John Morley's essays, perhaps the one on Wordsworth, he states that at a certain period in English history "great fires were burning, but they were burning low." It is a bad thing for the world and for the church in the world when the fires of preaching are allowed to burn low. Those fires ought never to be banked or allowed to get low. We recently had to add to the heating facilities in the house we live in. We did it by installing in addition to the regular heater, four or five gas stoves having a most suggestive name; "radiant fire burners." Make no account of the fact that they burn gas. Do not work out any flippancies about gas and preaching. All that has been overdone and is no longer fresh humor. But think of that other term "radiant fire"! The names of a dozen preachers, some dead, some living, leap to my lips as I write the words. I see their faces and hear their voices as they pour out upon the chilled lives

of men and women the glorious gospel of the blessed God with a "radiant fire," and in so doing bring warmth and glow to the hearts of men.

These are the men whose lips are touched as with live coals from the altar of the Most High; who "maintain the spiritual glow" that keeps the world from going utterly drab; who keep the "lamp aglow upon the feet of men, and shining upon the paths of men"; who themselves "walk in the light" of Him who is ever shining in the dark places of human life.

Blessings upon all the ministers who think in a great way of the ministry itself and who by preaching and life make it to seem and to be the noble power it is for the life of mankind.

WILLIAM FRASER MCDOWELL.

Bishop's Residence, Washington, D. C.





Our sufficiency is from God; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant.—  
*2 Corinthians 3. 6.*

## I

### THE PREACHER IN AMERICAN HISTORY AND LIFE

ONE of the luminous phases which, here and there amid our duller language, shines like a sword flashed in sunlight, is the simple motto of the Army and the Navy, "For the honor of the service." It suggests at once the nobleness of a great tradition and the pride of an illustrious fellowship. It intimates to feeling as well as to thought that the compensations of service are in no mean or mercenary rewards, but in qualities of life, in stewardships of purpose, and high experiences of more than common duty. "For the honor of the service," like a flag upon a coffin, will explain without a detail, a soldier's heroism, a sailor's courage, immeasurable suffering, infinite labor, a lonely death. It is something of the spirit thus invoked which should be vibrant in any thought of the Christian ministry; and it is in the hope of awakening something of that feeling that this chapter is devoted to a survey of the preacher in American history and life.

The limits of a single chapter prevent anything more than the most brief outline of what is, at best, an epic story. Adequately to trace the preacher in his march through American history and life would require a volume, while to broaden the survey to the world beyond our continent and our short three hundred years would be to rewrite the annals of western civilization. Notwithstanding this, when one undertakes to tell the preacher's place in history he is involved in perhaps the most astonishing of life's ironies of unrecognition. For the preacher is the maker of history of whom historians are mute, the builder of empires of whom emperors have never heard, the creator of states whom statesmen have ignored, the herald of democracy whom demagogues and people have forgotten, the founder of education whom educators have scorned, the leader of philanthropies whom philanthropists discredit. Preachers, for the most part, have been obscure; yet without their presence society disintegrates into a dangerous individualism, human life grows cheap, conventions tested by generations of moral enterprise wither in disuse, and laws cannot be enforced. Since the time of Saint Paul the preacher has been made a spectacle unto all men. Nothing is at once more ludicrous and misleading than

the preacher of fiction, except the preacher of the stage. On the stage, marriage ceremonies are performed backward, which is typical of the ridiculous misrepresentation of the ministry in those arts which most presume to hold a mirror up to life. With few exceptions, the hypocrites, the clowns, the crooks, the caricatures of the ministry are given ample publicity, while the real preacher who, more than any other man, has established schools, initiated philanthropies, maintained the inheritance of culture uninterrupted, and in crucial epochs shaped confused political thinking into moral purposes and use, has not yet come into his own.

That preacher bulks large in American experience. To look at, he is not an heroic figure; but his life, for the most part, is an heroic life. He is not always well educated; but he is generally more widely read and more disciplined to think than the average of his neighbors. He is not always well bred; but nevertheless he adds to the durable values of the community. He is not always tactful or patient, and he is sometimes selfish, for he also has his treasure in an earthen vessel; but there are generally large aspects of generosity about him, and he is almost always capable of great sacrifice without advertising it. Behind

all that makes the splendid story of the nation—its rougher conquests, its loftier aims, its greatening freedom, its more solid prosperities—is the innumerable company of its preachers, unhonored, unremembered, unrewarded, who were as faithful as they have been forgotten, and whose unrecorded labors have been indispensable in the making of a history which, as Channing put it, “has not a place even in the margin for the minister and the school mistress.”

There is no better beginning for such a survey as has been indicated than with the preacher as pioneer. Someone, speaking to this theme a few years ago, remarked that in all the settlement of America only in Virginia was the church an afterthought; and in the origins of settlements the church, of course, means preeminently the preacher. It was a preacher, John Robinson, who from the quay at Delft, put courage into the aching hearts of the Pilgrims as the *Mayflower* slid slowly down the lonely highway of the sea. From the *Mayflower*, for two hundred years the story of New England is the story of stern Puritan preachers whose hands, though they sometimes lay heavy on the developing colonial life, were nevertheless always shaping it toward the most permanent and highest good.

It is the story of Puritan preachers who were always building the strongest intellectual and moral bulwarks against the tides of social license and personal evil such as have, since their day, beaten violently around our elder American ideals. The shadow of the minister of Scrooby still falls in benediction across the progress of democracy.

In the rifts which mar the harmony of New England Puritanism, it is the preacher who still preserves amid his heresy the essential good, as the story of Rhode Island will illustrate. For the history of Rhode Island cannot be told in the glowing recital of its prosperity; its timbers and textiles, its Corliss engines and colleges, its politicians and dyes. Its history and, fundamentally, its social character, root back in Roger Williams, a preacher who, banished from one colony, established another and became the founder of this proud commonwealth.

The story of New England is practically the story, with slightly different colorings, of most of the continent. To follow the migrations of the early settlers of America is to travel in the footsteps of the pioneering preacher. It was the Jesuits who penetrated what they called the northern wilderness and invited men to the Mississippi Valley. The

settlement of Pennsylvania is a story of German Protestants led by their pastors, and of Quakers whose preachers were no less devoted because they claimed no professional standing. The Huguenots who peopled the Carolinas with faith and sacrifice, were accompanied, where they were not led, by their ministers; and it was the devotion of Moravian missionaries that consecrated the soil of Ohio. If one extraordinary figure is wanted, it is that of David Brainerd, feeble in frame and melancholy in temperament, and dead at twenty-nine; but who at his death had made the pathways among his Indians safer for white feet than they had ever been before. While from Massachusetts to Georgia, from Cape Cod to the Great Lakes, every mile was traveled by the horses of Methodist circuit riders, as Pilmoor and Boardman and King and Williams and Embury and Strawbridge and Garrettson and Lee and McKendree and the long heroic line broke out, amid a bitter wilderness, a highway for free grace. "The whole country," as President Roosevelt said, "is under a debt of gratitude to the Methodist circuit riders, the Methodist preachers, whose movement westward kept pace with the movement of the frontier, who shared all the hardships in the life of the frontiersman, while



at the same time ministering to that frontiersman's spiritual needs, and seeing to it that his pressing material cares and the hard and grinding poverty of his life did not wholly extinguish the divine fire within his soul." There can be no finer portrait of the labor of the pioneer preacher than that given by Doctor Tipple of Francis Asbury, the leader of them all, who "for half a century, like a spiritual Atlas, bore the American continent on his shoulders; who in his day builded altars in almost every city and town in the United States, and kindled thereon fires which have not yet gone out; who heralded the doctrine of human democracy when the nation was in the throes of a gigantic conflict with paternalism and aristocracy; who inculcated respect for law and created ideals of righteousness and citizenship along the mountain roads, and through the trackless forests, where Civilization walked with slow yet conquering step; who kept Hope alive in thousands of hearts where Despair ever stood at the door with a coffin."<sup>1</sup>

Asbury was the forerunner, but there were many who followed. In 1800 there were only two hundred and fifteen settlers in all of what is now Illinois; yet within four years Meth-

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<sup>1</sup>Tipple: *The Heart of Asbury's Journal*, p. xii.

odism had Benjamin Young preaching to that frontier. One cannot appreciate all the factors which have gone to the making of that great State without taking account of him, and of a greater than he, Peter Cartwright; yet there is published at least one not inconsiderable history of Illinois in which neither is mentioned, though Peter Cartwright was twice a candidate for the United States Congress against Abraham Lincoln, and once defeated him. A survey of the raw territory of Alabama in 1803 will disclose Lorenzo Dow pioneering there on behalf of the gospel as other men were pioneering for home and family; and a year later a Methodist preacher was pushing westward the frontier of Indiana. Tracing the progress of American expansion from Plymouth Rock to the Pacific slope, there will always be discovered in the crest of the advancing wave a preacher, rough-clad, unafrighted, daring men and whatever devils there may be in the name of civilization and Christ.

There is no more moving story than that of the settlement of the Oregon country. It is a story told in the heroisms of brave men and braver women, some known, but more already forgotten by the careless inheritors of the empire their labors made possible. Two are

not forgotten, Jason Lee and Marcus Whitman, preachers both. Jason Lee and his gigantic energy in the interests of his Indian missions and the expanding nation, his incessant missionary activities and his perilous return to the East to recruit more settlers and to rouse Congress to the value of the Northwest, constitute a record of patriotic and religious service which history is proud to preserve. What tale of tragedy is more compelling than that of his terrible journey at the risk of his life, with the bewildering hour when the Indian messenger overtakes him with the word that his young wife and infant child are dead together and together in their grave;—that lonely but indomitable journey forward, with a broken heart, only to find a blind Congress saying, "We are nearer to the remote nations of Europe than to Oregon," and repeating Senator Benton's remark, made in 1825, that "The ridge of the Rockies should be forever a national boundary!"

The story of Oregon is told also in the name of Marcus Whitman, who, when all detracting criticism has done its work, will yet be found to have given large impetus to migration to the Northwest. That story of Oregon discovers him also walking, riding, running four thousand almost impossible miles, through

mountain passes twenty feet in snow, through incessant storms, through icy rivers, the first white man to take that unknown Indian trail as he, too, hurried eastward on an errand which would not wait. If his interest was more in the critical affairs of his Mission and less in the expansion of the American domain than earlier historians would indicate, yet his ride is an achievement unsurpassed in the annals of American patriotism. Though in his recruiting for the Mission he rather reaped from Jason Lee's sowing of two years before, and the elder tradition of his success at Washington, where Lee had failed, is gravely suspect now; still it is undoubted that when, some months later, he returns to Oregon with a selected body of new settlers, it is to land forever American that he goes back, identified for all time with the great events with which he is contemporary. It is Whitman the preacher, then, who seals his ministry with martyrdom among the Indians to whom he has devoted his life; and if his name be lower in the list of heroes than once men wrote, it shines the brighter for the death he died as one of that incomparable multitude who have been slain unto God.

There are other dramatic pages in this history of American expansion; none more

vibrant with the strength of fearless men or more vivid with their sins of avarice and passion, none more eloquent of courage and adventure, than that which tells the tale of the 'forty-niners and the lure of California gold. But that page will also show, in the gold camps and gambling houses and brawling streets of that lawless time, the figure of another preacher, William Taylor, rebuking, inviting, restraining, inspiring with something of better purpose, those rough and violent men as, in season and out, he proclaimed to the pioneer the chastening summons of the gospel.

Further instances need not be recalled. The contribution which the preacher has made to American pioneer life is unmistakable; that of the Methodist preacher is conspicuous. From Asbury, dead these hundred years and more, to the least known living preacher on the now dissolving frontier, Methodism, as President Hyde has written, has been the revival of grace when law had lost its grip and love was dragging her anchor.

But the preacher has been a pioneer not alone in the geographical implications of the word, not simply as a participant in the wild life of the plainsman and the settler, the mining camp and the hunter's wilderness; but in

the enterprises of expanding life. While he trod the untraveled ways of swamp and prairie and climbed the slopes of alien mountains, he was pilgriming in mind among the disciplined and lovelier engagements of established culture. His body, like Abram, dwelt in tents; his spirit lived in the city for which he looked, that organized and more ideal society which sometime was to be. He has been a pioneer, not only among uninhabited and hostile places, but in the creation and employment of those instruments which produce and sustain urbanity and peace. In law, in order, in philanthropy and education, he has labored at the beginning of things; though to illustrate his service in all these areas of social progress reference need be made to only one.

It is trite to remark, though no less worth remarking, that higher education in America began in the heart of a preacher, Harvard University being no more than the oak which has grown from the acorn of the Reverend John Harvard's two hundred and sixty books. Yale is a monument to the faith and works of ten Congregational ministers who inaugurated the college with their personal gifts. Back of Princeton are the sacrificial figures of a group of Presbyterian clergymen. The name of Eleazor Wheelock is unfamiliar to the

present generation; but Eleazor Wheelock, a minister, still speaks to this generation through Dartmouth College, which owes its existence to him. Rutgers and Hamilton were each founded by a preacher. Iowa College, the oldest collegiate institution in the State, harks back to 1843, when eleven graduates of Andover entered the young territory to preach and teach. They were such men as DeTocqueville might have had in mind when he described the American pioneer as a man who "penetrates into the wilds of a new world with the Bible, an ax, and some newspapers," for they had all of these articles and little else. Within a year or two they met to consider the beginning of a college, only to discover that their idea had been anticipated and that college education had already begun in Iowa in the dreams and deeds of one of its prophetic figures, another preacher who lives in memory as Father Turner.

In Kansas the story is the same. Back of Manhattan College, one of the great agricultural schools of America, is the Reverend Joseph Dennison, a graduate of Wilbraham Academy and Wesleyan University. Baker University, the oldest collegiate institution in Kansas, organized in 1856, is the direct creation of the Methodist preachers of Kansas.

Through those wild days upon the border it was a beacon of light to show the highway to the better days that were to be. It heard the tramp of John Brown's men, and marked the mad passions of the border ruffians and not much better border gentlemen. It looked across the rolling hills and saw the flames of Lawrence when Quantrell swept down upon the town in a hurricane of blood and fire. From its first Commencement to the present time it has not ceased to send a steady stream of men and women into the conflict of righteousness, and in its service to the commonwealth has been born much of the boldness and the glory which made Kansas, alone among a circle of unregarding States, a pioneer in prohibition and law enforcement.

It is this same story which is written around the colleges of the continent. When one names the universities of America which are incarnating the ideals of Christian life with ample scholarship and liberal culture, he is identifying largely the monuments of preachers who dared to be pioneers in the purposes, the labors, the sacrifices, out of which alone the means of education can arise. And though it can be given no more than passing notice, it is not without immeasurable significance that the preacher has not only built colleges,



he has directed and sustained them. The coat of arms of American education might appropriately be a Prince Albert rampant on a field of brass. Edwards, Witherspoon, McCosh, Dwight, Durbin, Fiske, Olin, Gobin, to say nothing of the ordained men who in presidents' chairs and at professors' desks still live and labor, suggest a continuing service. It was a noted educator of Ohio who wrote that his experience had taught him to despair of establishing, with any permanency, even a good district school, where there was not a good church and an intelligent ministry to watch over and sustain it. Alike in the rough out thrust of a new nation to traverse and populate its domain, and in the persistent up-reach of expanding life to realize the means and opportunities of culture, the preacher has been a pioneer.

The preacher also holds a large, if unappreciated, place in American history and life, as a patriot. He has not only pushed forward the frontiers of his country and leavened its society with Christian ideas and culture; he has been second to none in the preservation of the country which he so greatly helped to make. No influence more constrained and shaped the spirit of American thought and life toward the time of inde-

pendence, than that of the Election Day sermons preached before the governor of the Massachusetts colony and the House of Representatives on the day of election of His Majesty's Council. To read those sermons from 1760 on is to hear through them the tramp of tumultuous events draw ever near. Out of a dozen sermons which would serve as illustrations, one will be enough, that of the Reverend Gad Hitchcock which he preached on Election Day of 1774.

It was a time of turmoil. The Boston tea party had made history. A British fleet and British troops were on the way to the turbulent colony. The colonists were greatly excited. Gad Hitchcock's sermon on that election day of 1774 did not gloss over the inescapable facts. It was a thoroughgoing exposition of government and a statement of the colonists' grievances. Governor Hutchinson was of a different temper. He was what Ambassador Page, a hundred and thirty-five years later, described as one of the Sons of the Olive Branch. He did not want even to hear the sermon; he wanted to retreat safely into the governor's castle. He was uncompromisingly forced to remain where he belonged, and as Gad Hitchcock preached, he turned to the trembling governor and thun-

dered, "Let the governor in his chair of state hear it, we not only mourn with groanings that cannot be uttered, and all because the wicked rule. The castle cannot shelter him from the searching thunderbolt. . . . King George may say the evils which produce this state of things are imaginary, but I tell you, and I tell the tyrant to his face, it is because the wicked rule." That was not exactly the wooing note, but it was fairly well understood; and that is but an instance, repeated again and again, of the fashion in which the preacher of that heroic time wrought at the structure of the patriotism which was to make a nation.

We shall never let perish the memory of the men who fell at Lexington, the first martyrs to American democracy; but we have largely forgotten that it was the teaching of the Lexington pulpit which inspired and struck the first blow for independence. Jonas Clark, the Lexington minister, had feared nothing but God and sin; and he had preached a gospel of righteousness and fearlessness in politics as well as religion. He too was at the battle of Lexington; and when it was over, he saw there Jonas Parker, the strongest wrestler of the village, who had sworn never to run from English ball or bayonet, lying dead where he had

stood. He saw gray-haired Caleb Monroe sprawled out where he had fallen, and Caleb Harrington dead on the steps of the church; and, looking out at the bodies of these his parishioners and personal friends, he saw with a prophet's vision the far issues of that strife upon the village green, and said, "From this day will be dated the liberty of the world."

Sixty-two years later, in another and a raw young village in the Middle West, another battle was fought to the finish in the same long campaign for the liberty which Jonas Clark foresaw; when another preacher, Elijah P. Lovejoy, after persecutions which might have broken the spirit of a regiment, was killed by a mob at Alton, Illinois, and by his death won in America the freedom of the press.

Those were fierce, vindictive, lawless days, not possible to live through unaffected, not easy to remember, after seventy years, without partiality and prejudice. But the tumult of their passions has long since died to silence; and where yonder, in the flaming fifties, were battle, massacre and pillage, now the border, blossoming with its harvests, throbs to the industry of growing cities, rich in patriotism that knows no sectional tradition.

In all this the preacher has had his part. It is his voice that rises clearly through those

raucous times of mob and violence, giving courage to frightened countrysides, and sustaining the spirits of harried towns and settlements amid the ashes of their calamity and the horror of their grief. It was his influence, by life and lip, which went far to soften the cruelties of those reckless moods that broke out in raid and outrage. On both sides the line that separated free soil from slave, preachers, far apart upon the principle of States' rights but one in loyalty to righteousness, brought to the conflict of confused and bitter politics the claims of conscience and the challenge of comparison, and so kept open, through the terror of a tragic time, the reconciling springs of prayer and pity.

He was also in the thick of the events that filled the times of Civil War, when the republic rocked upon its foundation and the world waited, sometimes in fear, sometimes in hope, for its fall. No reference save one need be made to those preachers who put on, some the Federal uniform and some the Confederate gray, without laying off the marks of Christ, and marched away in what were then the greatest civilian armies the world had seen. That one exception is General Leonidas Polk, a missionary in spirit, whose record as a Southern soldier has left unsullied his char-

acter as clergyman and Bishop. But, apart from them, the fact remains to be emphasized that no reckoning can be made of the sources of the strength of that great figure in the White House, who held a discordant North to its one stupendous labor and, amid the antagonisms of war, treason, slander, and intrigue, kept his soul unmarred by a single unkind passion, unweakened by a published doubt; no reckoning can be made of the sources of Abraham Lincoln's strength without considering the preachers who built around him a bulwark of personal counsel and reinforcing prayer. Dr. Gurley was one, and Bishop Simpson; and there were others, as well, who hallowed many a midnight as they knelt beside him and encouraged many a day as they sustained his spirit. Nor will we forget Joseph Ruggles Wilson in his Augusta pulpit on a certain Sunday morning, substituting for his sermon the simple announcement that a great battle was raging in Virginia and the forces of the Confederacy were suffering from a lack of ammunition. His congregation must do its duty and at the close of the services the ladies would repair to the munition factory to help with the cartridges. "You will now rise and sing the Doxology and be dismissed." He will represent those thou-

sands of preachers whose practical piety fed the streams of Southern devotion, differing from all others in that his son was to be President of a united nation during a more terrible conflict than the Civil War.

It is impossible to omit one other name from any just appraisal of the forces that went to the saving of the nation: that of Henry Ward Beecher, whose was the most commanding single voice in two continents for the cause of freedom, righteousness, and inseparable union. His distinguished labors in this country were crowned by his unprecedented service on the other side of the sea when his series of addresses in England on behalf of the North and against the recognition of the Confederacy constituted, as Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "a more remarkable embassy than any envoy who has represented us in Europe since Franklin pleaded the cause of the young republic at the Court of Versailles. He kissed no royal hand, he talked with no courtly diplomats, he was the guest of no titled legislator, he had no official existence; but through the hearts of the people he reached nobles, ministers, courtiers, the throne itself." He was a preacher!

Those epic days have passed and America will not need such an ambassador again. The

rude frontiers are all but gone. But amid these different days and their different demands justice will not allow the long heroic tale to be forgotten: that from the first breath of freedom which blew the ships of Pilgrims to New England shores, through the winds of revolution in which an ancient tyranny went down, in the storms that swept the separated States when the republic had its test in flame and blood, the preacher has taken his place in American life as a patriot whose courage, sacrifice, and labor are unquestioned. From sea to sea the continent is in his debt.

That debt is registered on a third count. It is the debt owed to the preacher because of the social influences rising in and released from his home; because of the children he has given to the service of the world. It is an often repeated statement that of sixty-three names in our American Hall of Fame, ten are names of preachers' children: Bancroft the historian, Henry Ward Beecher, Henry Clay, Jonathan Edwards, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, S. F. B. Morse, Francis Parkman, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Less than one fifth of one per cent of the population have practically sixteen per cent of the honors, or eighty times their proportionate share. In an



issue of England's *Dictionary of National Biography* a few years ago, 510 names of eminent men recorded are of sons of lawyers, 350 are of sons of physicians, and 1,270 are of the sons of ministers. It is reported that *Who's Who in America* for 1924 contains 25,357 biographies. Eleven per cent or more of the names are names of those whose fathers were ministers. In proportion to their number in the total population of America there are twenty-eight times as many preachers' children reported in *Who's Who* as there should be.

The parsonage has its children in honored places in every sphere of life. They are beyond enumeration, of course; but a few selected names will suggest the debt which society owes the preacher on this count. In science the children of the ministry are represented by Agassiz, Jenner, Field, Morse, Romanes, the Wrights; in history by Bancroft, Parkman, Hallam, Froude, Sloane, Muller; in art by Joshua Reynolds, and Christopher Wren; in literature by Jonson, Addison, Cowper, Goldsmith, Coleridge, Keble, Young, Tennyson, Arnold, Kingsley, Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë and her sisters, Henry James, Stephen Crane, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Anna Steele; in philosophy by William James; in modern

politics by Governor Morton, Senator Dolliver, Senator Beveridge; in jurisprudence by Justices Field and Brewer and Justice, now Secretary Hughes; in music by Reginald DeKoven and Louise Homer. Four sons of preachers have occupied the White House, Presidents Buchanan, Arthur, Cleveland, and Wilson; and seven of the mistresses of the White House have been preachers' daughters.

These may represent the service which the preacher has given to society through his children; but that service is not accomplished only in the eminent and noted of them. It has been as real, though unrecognized, in the nameless and unknown men who pushed back the frontier and in places heretofore waste builded cities, societies, schools, and the ideals and institutions of an enlarging culture. They have wrought their spirit into the structure of national life. Colleges are monuments to their vision and sacrifice, churches are the product of their lonely labor. Their children have wakened the strings of enduring song and had part in the nobler literature of the world. They have been voices of righteousness in Senate chambers and cabinets of state. They have mastered space by electric communication, conquered the air in flying craft, and penetrated the secrets of nature for a

hundred uses. The sons of preachers have been summoned to kings' counsels and have sat in presidents' chairs; their daughters have been examples to a social world. The honor of the service is no empty phrase when applied to the Christian ministry. It has a noble and unique tradition of pioneers, patriots, protagonists of culture, whose lives, whose labors, whose illimitable devotion, whose deaths, have been the inextricable glory of three hundred American years.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PREACHER AS THE INTERPRETER OF HIS AGE

IN the final address which Silvester Horne delivered in his series on the Lyman Beecher Foundation at Yale University, he remarked that "the danger of lectures that deal mainly with the past is that the final impression should be left, that our own time is in the nature of an anti-climax to the illustrious generations we have been passing in review; that the great gates leading into the spacious lands of opportunity are all closed, and that nothing remains to us, but some shabby and petty doors giving upon meager and uninteresting fields."<sup>1</sup> It would not be surprising if some such impression had been left by the preceding pages; but nothing could be farther from the actual truth. As Silvester Horne in the same address urged upon his audience that "the work of the preacher in modern times remains as romantic and dramatic as ever," so the chapters which follow aim to make clear that the opportunity of the modern

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<sup>1</sup>Horne: *The Romance of Preaching*, p. 265. Used by permission of Fleming H. Revell Company, publishers.

preacher, his influence and his responsibility, are as great as, if not greater than they have ever been before.

For the age in which the preacher lives to-day marshals a procession of magnitudes, alike sublime and sinister, such as were never before present in a single period. In order to parallel the first quarter of this twentieth century one must bring together nearly all the nineteen centuries which have gone before.

Describing the present age from one point of view, an observer will remark the crumbling of authority, the increasing disregard of law, the sudden rise to social and political position of men without training in either culture or citizenship or intelligent respect for public interest, but whose claim to deference rests wholly upon the millions they have been able to accumulate by accident or cunning. Such an observer will take account of an invasion of the older domestic sanctities, a prurience of fiction and an emptiness and indecency of the drama, an erraticalness in contemporary music and an eroticism in contemporary amusements. He will recognize, accordingly, as in a rescript, the decay and disaster of the Roman civilization marked, as it was, by the same decrepitude of the elder institutions, the same emptiness of literature and feebleness of

art, the same failure of authority in religion and the state alike. This is an age of the natural sciences rather than of classical culture; but in the eagerness of the modern mind to explore and master the forces of nature, in the response of the modern mood to the challenge of new facts, one can feel the beat of that inquiring and courageous spirit which, five hundred years ago, burst its ancient restraints and blossomed in the Renaissance. In the revolt of the contemporary mind from elder religious forms and complacencies, in the widespread inquisition which has searched and stung the church, in the present-day assault upon traditional dogma, in the discontent with religious forms; it needs no special discernment to recognize the movement of the modern mind which has been well termed "Toward a New Reformation." In the more clamorous social, industrial, and political ferment, in the disorder and violence which, from time to time, menaces alike stability of government and permanence of social institutions; one hears again the mobs that marched for justice behind John Ball and Wat the tyler in the England of 1381. The ferocity of princes may be a forgotten evil, but the severity of an industrial system is a living experience; and no thoughtful mind, whether sym-

pathetic or not, can blind itself to the significance and peril of the social resentment burning beneath the surface of events.

To all of this must be added the obvious statement that the age in which the modern preacher has his place is a time of wonders compared to which the miracles of the Scriptures seem almost small. Since 1900 the horizons of the world seem to have fallen out, and in the realms opened to the exploring intellect, in the apprehension of forces hitherto unsuspected, in the reaction of discovery upon our thought of the universe and life and God; we are face to face with the infinite. As Bishop Charles D. Williams has said, "We are living in one of those supreme crises of history when the long, slow processes of the world's life focus to a burning point and bring on their own judgment."<sup>2</sup> The dimensions of such a time as this, as indeed of any period, its character and spirit, are indications of the demands which it makes upon both institutions and men; and to no man does it present such obligations or offer such opportunities as to the preacher. He is to-day, as in the hour of his greatest service in the past, the interpreter of his age.

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<sup>2</sup> Williams: *The Prophetic Ministry for Today*, p. 69. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company.

There are other interpretative voices of varying degrees of authenticity; among which it may be well to note the newspaper. The newspaper offers primarily no interpretation of the day; it presents only a review of its events, and a review seen from any of a score of not unprejudiced points of view, and restated often with something quite other than the simple desire to present an accurate survey of the human scene. One cannot always get even the news from a newspaper; he may need almost a sheaf of them. To look for an accurate account of labor aims and grievances in papers controlled by large syndicates or rich individuals; to expect honest expositions of the progress of moral reform and of the enforcement of locally unpopular laws from any but a few outstanding exceptions to the newspaper average; to anticipate even an intelligent treatment of educational and religious enterprises from journals which habitually assign inexperienced or poorly educated reporters to discuss matters projected and maintained by highly specialized minds, is a futile search. It goes without saying that what has just been said involves no charge of malice on the part of the newspapers and those who produce them. From the nature of the case they are what they are. "The function



of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them into relation with each other, and make a picture of reality on which men can act."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, though the days have passed in which the pronouncements of a Greeley and Dana and Watterson and Bowles formed the opinions and directed the judgments of almost a nation, the impact of editorial thinking to-day must not be underestimated. Only it must be appraised with an understanding of its inherent and avowed purpose. The newspaper signalizes events, it does not make a picture of reality; and to supplement personal observation with such expositions as Owen Sinclair's *The Brass Check*, and Walter Lippman's *Public Opinion*, is to appreciate the seriousness of the situation in which the newspaper is one of the most insubordinate factors of common life as it is engaged in the higher enterprises of experience.

The greater literary magazines may more nearly claim a place as interpreters of their times. Reviewing, not so much contemporary events as the directions and reactions of thought produced by those events, their edi-

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<sup>3</sup> Lippmann: *Public Opinion*, p. 358. Used by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, publishers.

torial minds sit high above the spume of things in which the newspaper lives, and offer calm and reasoned definition of the ferment which makes up so much of life. The defect which defeats their purpose is that they sit too high. One can paraphrase Tennyson and say that to our question, out of the ruck of things, is there any hope? their answers

“. . . peal from that high land,  
But in a tongue few men can understand.”

With still more show of reason, perhaps, claim is made for other voices that they truly interpret the times amid which they speak. It is made for the scientists, and not a few scientists are making it for themselves. It is being made for experts, here and there, in some specialized and restricted knowledge, in laboratories and college chairs. But no mind which gives itself to a separated department of intelligence, however vital and popularized that department may be, can interpret an age in which meet and mingle so many and so varied streams of knowledge, experience, discovery, and revolt.

These several forms of expression have been thus named in order to make more evident, by comparison and contrast, that no matter how favorable one's judgment may be as to the

contribution which they bring and the service they render to the age's understanding of itself, theirs is nevertheless the defect of inherent limitations.

For there are three qualifications which are indispensable to an interpreter. First, he must be familiar with that which he undertakes to interpret. His must be a broad and eclectic understanding; and while to such a mind the intricate and recondite details of fact may be not wholly known, yet, just as one may be able to translate the *Iliad* into living English without being competent to write a history of the Greek particles, so one may understand the spirit, passion, aims, and limitations of a period without having specialized in the ever-changing and remote particularizations of detailed interests. To few men indeed is given the opportunity of such general familiarity with his times as is given to the preacher. An editor like Godwin, of the earlier *Nation*, may find himself in the thick of things-in-general, but no more so than the preacher. Preaching has been and still is considered a narrow occupation by those who derive their opinions from impulses rather than facts; and, of course, it can be made so and has been made so. Even then it would be difficult to make it narrower than some of

those who criticize its limitations have been able to make their interests. But the intelligent preacher finds that the world is his mental parish; and nothing which concerns humanity fails to affect him. No other occupation involves, in what may be called its technic, an acquaintance with the entire life of society. Ever so many wars may be imagined between science and religion, if one's imagination is peculiarly vivid, but one cannot imagine a fact, a doctrine or a discovery or a claim of science which does not impinge at once upon the interest of the preacher. Every enlargement of human knowledge amplifies the conception of God. No conception of God can remain unchanged through a generation, even through a decade of such achievements and events as the past decade has witnessed, and be a true conception. The words that vibrate across a continent, becoming vocal through the radio, give new significance to the voice that breathed o'er Eden. Bergson's Vital Impulse plunging through the stuff of things adds inquiry and reenforcement to the preacher's exposition of the immanence of God. The radio-activities of certain recently separated elements must surely affect the hypothesis of personal continuity on which the preacher builds the inferences which join with revela-

tion to support our faith in immortality.

The preacher's obligation to know life goes further. It may still seem religious and wise, in some quarters, to declare that the pulpit must avoid politics; but in an age when the democratic ideal is invading every province of thought and conduct and organization, no preacher can, if he would, keep his mind free or his utterances clear of the democratic mood. No intelligent preacher will; for democracy, while it is the most dangerous and difficult enterprise of human relationship, is nevertheless inescapable. It is the test of intelligent life; and the preacher's vocation demands of him such familiarity not alone with the shibboleths of society, but with the facts of social experience and mood and purpose, that he may speak convincingly to men and women who constantly face those facts. He has to be immersed in the immediate because it is to men likewise immersed that he has to speak, not as if they occupied the social setting of the first century, but as actually participating in the multitudinous drama of the twentieth century. The preacher of to-day dare not be unfamiliar with whatever other streams may water the intellectual and social experience of his age. Literature, art, industry, the games men play, the amusements which

engage them, the deceptions by which they are lured into the twilight zones of seriousness—all of these illumine the preacher's ideas, discipline his convictions, sustain his sense of duty, and again and again open the springs from which derive his vital experiences. In a word, the preacher is the only man whose vocation coincides with human experience, whose specialty is the broadest culture, and who is the more effective master of his specific field as he is more thoroughly at home with the widest generalizations of knowledge.

He is the conservator of society's better appreciations. In medicine the public pays high honor to the consulting specialist; but the health of the community depends upon the general practitioner. His skill, his knowledge, his precision of judgment increase with the advancing wisdom of the specialist from whom he takes counsel; but he himself, not the specialist, is the conservator of the public health. It is not otherwise with the preacher. The public gives high honor to the scholar, to the ecclesiastical administrator, to the director of particularized social enterprises. But the moral and ethical health of society depends upon the preacher, whose vision includes, whose insight appraises, and whose

intelligence, touched with that emotion we are learning is so necessary in the comprehension of life, interprets the age to itself.

For the preacher possesses, to a greater degree than any other man, a second qualification indispensable to the interpreter of his age. He is not only familiar with the currents of the age which is to be interpreted; he has broad and intimate personal contacts with those to whom the interpretation is to be made. As he sits at the center of human knowledge, so he moves at the heart of human experience.

Senator William E. Borah, in one of his public addresses, now appearing in book form, said of Abraham Lincoln, that he possessed in a remarkable way the capacity for intellectual solitude, even in the midst of the throng—yet he never lost faith in the throng. A recent reviewer, quoting that remark, contrasts Senator Borah with Lincoln whom he eulogizes, and points one of the qualities which seems to rise like an impalpable but fatal barrier between Senator Borah and the American people whom he so sincerely serves. The reviewer says, "While admiring the intellectual honesty and the humane principles of such a man, it is possible to lay down this record of his speeches and wonder if he has

ever been moved greatly by human contacts?"

The preacher, by his very vocation, is moved greatly by human contacts; and it is in this light that one has to see the pastoral aspect of the preacher's life. Too much has been made in the rather sentimental appraisals of the ministry, of the quite negligible fact that, with few exceptions, the preacher's life is a pilgrimage upon the earth, denied the domestic securities and happy routine which gather around permanent firesides and an unchanging circle of acquaintanceship and friends. That, of course, is in a measure true; but entirely too little attention has been given the fact that wherever he is, the preacher is never on the circumference of the social scene, but always at the center. If where he sits is not always the head of the table, he is always a good way above the salt. His associations are restricted by no custom, conventionality, social standards, trade or professional surroundings. He dare do all that may become a man. There are few other men and women in the actual life of the world whose associations and contacts are not largely carried on in specialized and standardized atmospheres. Their knowledge of and familiarity with other men and women narrow quite naturally to clearly dif-



ferentiated and constant limitations, of trade, of litigation, of ill health, of administration, of mass labor, of the classroom. Only within very small groups of personal friendships do they meet and feel the more authentic and personal experience upon which beats the impact of those great and intimate realities which make the mystery, the majesty, the glory of life. But it is in those impacts that the preacher finds his vocation most effective. In him occupation and experience coincide. One of Charlotte Brontë's heroines, after some disturbing episode, is made to say that she still felt life at life's sources. It is at its sources that the preacher lives with life. It is his word which begins the home, transforming the beauty of happy but untested fellowship and confident but untried love into that grave adventure of affection which we call the domestic life. It is the preacher who touches home life with a new and subtle emotion as, through the rites of the church, he brings to infancy an eternal meaning and informs the family relationship with inescapable responsibility. It is the preacher who walks a thousand times through the valley of the shadow and by the strange contagions of the human spirit is enabled to reinforce bewildered men and women with courage and hope and that

tranquillity of mind which makes of suffering a discipline instead of a desert. It is the preacher to whom, as to no other, men and women, regardless of time, place, position, or character, turn amid their tragedies of sorrow; and he, as no other, finds himself at home in the presence of death.

The significance of this close association in the intimate and crucial experiences of men, is not simply that the preacher has these contacts, but that these contacts disclose to him the actual and determining mind of his age. From them he knows the swift upspringing of his generation's doubt from the constant darkness of great calamity and unassuaged grief. He knows the reaction of these fundamental experiences toward the enunciation of religious views, and can appraise the force of the liberal appeal compared with that of traditional belief. He knows the groping wistfulness, the passionate anarchy of minds on whom the human storm has broken, as no one else can know it. At the same time he has access to the more militant life of his day. He mingles on even terms with men as they work and play, puts his mind along with theirs in their individual enterprises and cooperative undertakings; and whether it be the Odyssey of a gifted intelligence or the lament of

troubled ignorance, whether it be the vivid story of successful wealth or the short and simple annals of the poor, it is the preacher who has opportunity to read at first hand the intellectual and spiritual biography of the generation to which the age is to be interpreted. Browning flings up to his "Sordello" the admonition,

"Thou hast  
Life, then—wilt challenge life for us."

It is that high obligation—higher still, that privilege—which belongs to the preacher as to no other man. He has life; lives at life's sources; as the Greek maxim has it, looks on death and will start at no shadows. So, then, he challenges life for all others. It was Mrs. Humphry Ward who wrote that "the man who loves this poor human life of ours, without ever being fooled by it, . . . has a rare place among us."<sup>4</sup> She did not intend and surely would not have acknowledged the fact, but she was nevertheless describing the preacher. For this is a summary of the qualities inhering in his vocation and, ultimately, in his character, which make him the interpreter of his age. He loves life without being fooled by it.

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<sup>4</sup> Ward: *A Writer's Recollections*, vol. ii; p. 124. Used by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

The preacher loves life without being fooled by it because of his possession of a third indispensable requisite for an interpreter: he is dominated by an impregnable and impartial principle of interpretation. No preacher in modern times has exercised a wider and more effective influence over his age and place than did Robert W. Dale, of Birmingham. He was the leader of English nonconformity. A master of theology, popular, eloquent and commanding in the pulpit, he was also the voice of political action and the inspiration of social morality on many a platform and in many a conflict. Dead for thirty years, he is still speaking in British and American thought. The secret of his personality and his power has been given by Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, that he saw earthly affairs in the light of the Eternal. In a course of lectures upon some of the great English thinkers, Doctor Cadman also diagnosed what he called the structural deficiency in Huxley's mental nature, as "the absence of those adventurous tentacles which grope for the spiritual meaning of phenomena."<sup>5</sup> There may be few or many to-day from whose mental nature those adventurous tentacles which grope for the spiritual mean-

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<sup>5</sup> Cadman: *Charles Darwin and Other English Thinkers*, p. 71. Used by permission of Congregational Publishing Society.

ing of phenomena are absent, but the vast majority of men and women, quite to the contrary, are earnestly or instinctively feeling after the spiritual significance of life and its events. Against all the economic explanations of history, recently so popular, put a volume like Professor Shailer Mathews' *Spiritual Interpretation of History*. Beside the agnostic and materialistic expositions of modern science place Professor Thompson's *Spiritual Interpretation of Nature*, or Hudson's *The Truths We Live By*, or *Science and Human Affairs*, by Professor Curtis. Balance Bertrand Russell's pessimism and Professor Dewey's materialism, the teaching of Irwin Edman and Everett Dean Martin—noting the unintentional wistfulness in their attempts to find altruistic purposes for life so hopeless as they declare its outlook to be—with the writings of Josiah Royce or Paul Elmer More's studies of Plato. It will be difficult not to recognize the accuracy of A. J. Balfour's remark: "I doubt," he said, "whether there has been for generations a deeper interest than at this moment in things spiritual—however different may be its manifestations from those with which we are familiar in history."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Balfour: *Theism and Humanism*, p. 25. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, the George H. Doran Company.

One of the characteristic phrases of the religious vocabulary of a generation ago—that fine and figurative vocabulary of the circuit rider and the evangelist—was to the effect that the preacher stood between the living and the dead calling men to God. It is a phrase and a figure born of that older, individualistic conception of religion and evangelism, as accurate in its insight as it was expressive in its form. That older individualistic conception has been greatly modified, but the strategic position of the preacher has not altered; it has been given wider ranges. He stands in the same place, surrounded by the same inheritances of a great spiritual tradition, between a living society and social orders dead and dying, calling his day to the recognition of its own spiritual values, the spiritual implications of its events.

It need hardly be said that not all preachers have consistently done this; but this has been and remains their privilege, their opportunity, their obligation. Mr. Walter Lippmann has made a very suggestive criticism in his remark that the churches “come down to us with a tradition that the great things are permanent and they meet a population that needs above all to understand the meaning of change.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Lippmann: *Public Opinion*, p. 155. Used by permission of Harcourt Brace and Company, publishers.

Our generation, for instance, not alone the more specially trained intelligences but the popular mind as well, has been so invaded by the influences of modern science that it is confused, distracted, hesitant toward inferences which only color thought where it had been swift in conclusions that affected life itself. The passion of democracy, which has swept all fields of enterprise and intelligence, has become a flame in which institutions, traditions, faiths, and orders alike seem ready to dissolve. A fierce loyalty to truth, a demand for reality in those adventures of the spirit where reality is most necessary, but where, heretofore, it has been too easily taken for granted, has brought the most cherished beliefs, the most sacred formulas, to a relentless and searching scrutiny. History, religion and experience have been sternly summoned to present sound reasons for every hope they have presumed to lift before the wistful minds of men, until the age seems to question and to suspect the foundations on which its forebears reared the solemn structure of their faith and worship, and multitudes of men and women, in the language of the great Greek but with nothing of his spirit, carry a threatening shadow in their heart under the full sunshine. And all of this uncertainty of outlook,

this bewilderment of feeling, this skepticism of good, rises within the experience of political tragedy which turned the continent of historic culture into a land of famine, madness, and despair, confirmed the cynical remark that the "history of the human race is the diary of a Bear Garden," and disclosed beneath the surface of our latest civilization the ancient savageries of cunning, cruelty, and selfishness unchanged except in the employment of greater instruments for vaster holocausts than savagery has hitherto possessed.

It is well to face these sinister facts of present-day life, for they are the facts which the preacher faces, and they declare in no uncertain definitions what religion dare not be and what he must undertake. "Of all the interpretations of the Christian religion," as Professor Jacks has written, "there are few so false and none so worthless as those which reduce it to a wash of rose color spread over the dark realities of the world, or to a group of fancies in which the soul of man, knowing them to be untrue, takes a deceitful holiday from the burden and the tragedy of life."<sup>8</sup>

These are the facts of life; these are the facts which the preacher faces; they consti-

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<sup>8</sup>Jacks: *The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion*, p. 9. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, the George H. Doran Company.



tute the stream of change which the age needs to understand in connection with its tradition of the great permanences. The preacher, as no other man, faces them with a principle of interpretation which alone can inform them with constructive, sustaining, and purposeful meaning. He sees earthly affairs in the light of eternity.

Walter Pater has written of Marius, the Epicurean, that to him the whole of life seemed full of sacred presences. To the preacher, responsive to the age, aware of all of its mighty moods and menaces, life is full of sacred presences. Amid its tumult of intelligence and passion, of knowledge and agnosticism, of pessimism and strange, indomitable hope, he sees the achievements of men, the forces they have mastered, the truths they have established, the sufferings they endure, the high desires that elude their definitions, the mighty hopes that make them men, not as ends in themselves, finished business, but disciplining and prophetic presences moving through the solemn tragedy and pomp of time like the figures Dante saw on their way to the enduring light. His is the responsibility and the power to present the new disclosures of science which astonish and affright, in their true perspective, so that, however they may

disrupt old forms of faith they shall but amplify the realities which those forms tried, in their day of acceptance, to express. His is the principle and the application by which the passion of democracy is revealed as truly springing, not from inheritances of a common equality, but from the enduement of a common obligation. His it is to discern for men, and thus teach them a new discernment, that the realities of faith and the spirit are not imprisoned in perishable documents, deliverances or Scriptures, but are at one with that vast truth which is of the very life of God, "into which we have been gathered and in which we share." His it is to reiterate to his age, in ever-changing forms of speech, in ever-changing applications to events, but in the simple continuity of the truth which liberates, that "to make us spiritually were the first beginnings of thought, the making of alphabets, the making of literatures, the struggles of patriots, the death of martyrs, the creations of genius, the researches of science, the whole age-long struggle of the world."<sup>9</sup> His it is to make clear and plain that the age in which his generation lives and labors and is confused is but the latest stage in that increas-

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<sup>9</sup>Brierly: *Religion and Today*, p. 135. Used by permission of Congregational Publishing Society, publishers.

ing procession of purpose, and it is his privilege and opportunity to see to it that the thoughts of the men of his time are widened with the process of the suns. He challenges life for his contemporaries. He interprets it in terms of the Eternal. Out of its hurts and contradictions and mysteries, he discloses to them those dear and solemn beauties of affection, of truth, of duty, and of hope, which at once chasten and sustain the mind. He uncovers at the heart of life's bewilderments and battle those "things of the spirit which, though they disturb men, yet when they are revered, yield a lively and a constant joy."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cadman: *Ambassadors of God*, p. 23. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

### III

## THE PREACHER IN THE DIRECTION OF SOCIAL REFORM

ONE of the reflections suggested by the first chapter in this volume is that the pioneer is surely the one figure which has now passed from American life. To read a book like Professor Turner's *The Frontier in American History* is to see the march of a nation across the continent, and to realize the immeasurable debt which our day owes those intrepid spirits who transformed a wilderness into an empire, punctuating the record of their heroic enterprise with many a nameless grave. But that old pioneering life now remains only in the pages of a history too dull ever to disclose the passion that burned at the heart of the pioneer. Something of its color may still flame dimly through the imagination of novelists, from Washington Irving to Emerson Hough; but itself is gone. With the frontier has gone as well the epic figure of the frontier preacher, true son of an heroic age. Asbury, Peter Cartwright, William Taylor, representatives of the frontier at three main stages, loom

gigantic down the years; but they have left no successors since Van Orsdel and Iliff crossed the final range. To-day is a day of social commonplace.

But there is another aspect of this matter which needs be held in mind. The geographical frontier is gone, but is there no equivalent? The frontiersman of history and romance has had his day. The pioneer preacher, with his rough speech and ready arm, foregathers now with those kindred spirits of a vanished past. Where he rode his faithful horse, his successor drives a Ford; and where the outcasts of Poker Flat died amid the snow-bound pines, forgotten by their isolated world, other men and women around whom half a century of science has gathered a hundred luxuries, by radio enjoy at their discretion the information, eloquence, and music of the pleasant cities scattered across three thousand miles. From one end of the continent to another, from the metropolis to which the world pays tribute, to the settlement amid the mountain gorges, modern invention, modern science, modern transportation, have standardized food, clothing, literature, and amusements.

But through these commonplaces which have thus leveled life to a conventional comfort there runs another frontier; as challeng-

ing as the old, more difficult to transform and infinitely more dangerous to ignore. It is that frontier of industrial and social estimate by which the community or the commonwealth attempts to appraise the meaning of its social conditions, to remedy and remove its social discontents. On that frontier there is more room than ever for the pioneering mind; for that frontier is almost as various as human life. Heresy and orthodoxy in social theory, as Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin put it, "are matters of latitude and longitude." "A social outlook that is traditional in Kansas, is conventional in Chicago, progressive in Rochester, and anarchistic in the financial centers along the Atlantic seaboard."<sup>1</sup>

This variableness in the social frontier, these differing estimates put upon social conditions, must not be permitted to obscure the significance of the conditions themselves, which call for wise appraisal, or to blind men to the fact that hitherto the application of remedies has seemed only to result in the increase of social discontent. One of the discoveries now being made even by those most averse to such discovery is that the social ferment of the time is no mild disturbance simmering in the

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<sup>1</sup>Coffin: *In a Day of Social Rebuilding*, p. 46. Used by permission of Yale University Press.

gradual warmth of untrained minds habituated, through generations of labor and disadvantage, to the *status quo*. It is a threatening menace, fired by passions that flame with the fierce heat of long-accumulated injustices, long-deferred hopes, long-betrayed confidence, long-thwarted political aspirations, and now kindled to fresh and constant vigor by a new and inflammatory sense of power. It is being fed, also, from the selfishness, ignorance, and malice of not a few foreign-born disturbers of the economic peace who are social rebels for profit, landless and homeless by choice, heedless of the admonitions of the past and reckless of the possibilities of the future.

What has just been remarked might seem to be too emphatic a reference to the industrial discontent of the time; but it must be remembered that it is in the area of industrial relationships and organization that the present social and political order will be vindicated, transformed, or done away. Around this industrial emergency gather the various institutions of society, its remedial and corrective enterprises which, taken together, constitute the machineries of the social problem and comprise the field for social reform.

If illustration is needed it is close at hand. Here, for instance, is the enterprise of

public charity, involving almost incredible amounts of money, engaging the life-work of a host of trained men and women who combine personal qualities of the highest order with an earnestness and social patience almost religious in their devotion. They are becoming more and more expert in searching the last details of social and individual experience and character in an effort, not alone to remedy, but to prevent the avoidable misfortunes which are yet unhappily so common. Likewise upon this social frontier and not unidentified with industrial discontent, are the courts. No one will deny that they have created deep resentments by their maintenance of old injustices, by the expensiveness of judicial processes, and by the development and defense of intricate and unnecessary forms which seem to operate chiefly in the interests of overnumerous officials, employees, and attorneys. Theodore Roosevelt stated it mildly when he remarked that there is a tendency in the law toward the deification of technicalities. Rufus Choate's observation was more biting. He said, as Thomas Wentworth Higginson remembered his conversation, that the law "was a series of fossil injustices or petty maneuvers—like hare hunting in England, splendid horses and men, dogs



with pedigrees of centuries, and when all is done it is only a rabbit."<sup>2</sup>

Not so clearly recognized but no less actually involved, the malefactions of politics and government have their place in this social frontier. Lord Fisher, that great British seaman, is reported as saying that the politicians had deepened his faith in Providence. But whatever they have done for Lord Fisher, they have not deepened the faith of the average man in the practical values of democracy. In the ramifications of politics and the operations of government itself, the plain man cannot help discerning that property is too generally given precedence over human life, and financial investments seem more faithfully protected than the rights of personality.

The claims and enterprises of public health and morals must also be mentioned as forming part of this unavoidable frontier. They involve the community in responsibilities in respect of homes, of wages adequate for decent living, of restrictions upon the employment of children in gainful occupations, of censorship of public amusements, of police protection, and the eradication, or the tolerance, of public vice.

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<sup>2</sup>*Letters and Journals of Thomas Wentworth Higginson*, p. 71. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

All these and others which readily occur to mind are enterprises indigenous to every community, variously appraised, but constantly dealt with; the influences of which, in one way or another, impinge upon every life within the community. These institutions, enterprises, and the exigencies out of which they rise, comprise the field of social reform, the social frontier from which derive the constant discontents, the sense of social failure, and the demands which greaten with the days, for such profound and structural changes in the organization of society as will amount to almost a new social order.

What direction those demands will take is yet in the balance. To discern and wisely to control them constitute the insistent obligation resting upon society itself and particularly upon those minds to which have been given something of social insight and a sense of social responsibility. Two possible directions are already to be discovered. On the one hand there are those who look upon the present social order as they might look upon a well-used car. They recall the service it has rendered; the happy generations it has carried prosperously upon the road of time since Adam Smith published *The Wealth of Nations* and James Watt invented the con-

densing steam engine. They cannot forget that the wealth which has gone into popular education, into state and church and independent universities and colleges, into hospitals, libraries, public parks and recreational endowments, into museums of art and archæology; the wealth which has created the great highways, developed the natural resources of the country, and made possible the evolution and enjoyment of modern comfort and prosperity; has all been brought to us in this well-used social order. They regard it, accordingly, not only with traditional interest, but with something of affection; and they consider its present condition with an eye to conservation rather than to change. It is defective, they admit. It is badly worn. It needs new parts and the readjustment of the old. But all it needs is repairs. A new transmission rod, perhaps; new spark plugs, it may be; a new oiling system, and, by all means, new brake bands—then the machine will be as good as new. That is the attitude of many minds alike familiar with the past and alive to the present and with no lack of intelligence toward the social future.

On the other hand there are those, by no means less intelligent or energetic, who see the social order as a car which is not merely

well worn, but completely worn out. They see the cost of the wealth it has carried, the toll which its organization of industry takes in limb and life. They see the waste in the capitalistic system. They appreciate industrialism's by-product in personal, political, and social tragedy. No amount of repairs seems to them to promise any good. They see the need, not for tinkering, but for entire transformation. It is not the accessories that are at fault, they say, it is the engine; and they would abandon the old car and get one altogether new. Their hope for the world is not in social amelioration but in social revolution.

Which direction is to be followed, and on either, what specific steps are to be taken, what modifications wrought in society, what repairs are to be initiated, or what kind of new machinery is to be procured, are questions which lie beyond the scope of this chapter. This social emergency which, in one form or another, is always confronting society, has been briefly sketched at this point in order to fix attention upon the fact that in the direction of social reform for which the emergency calls, the preacher occupies a strategic place, when it becomes felt and clearly recognized.

This is not to say that the preacher has

always exercised the influence inherent in his position, or that when he has exercised it, he has done so wisely. Too frequently he has been little more than "a half-hearted meddler in great affairs." One of the less happy records which history is compelled to acknowledge is of the indifference of the church to social reform, its tardiness of sympathy and, sometimes, its quickness of opposition when ideals and activities toward the practical improvement of industrial and social conditions have been inaugurated. One of the unpleasant facts for Christian men and women to contemplate is that the church, in the past, has so frequently been a weight against, instead of an influence for, reforms which time has amply exhibited as of great and enduring worth; that the church has so often been a laggard at the rear of the procession toward social and political regeneration; that the prophetic spirits who have begun noteworthy enterprises for the correction of practical and preventable evils have too often been compelled to win the church to indorse what the church should have been the first to see and espouse and endeavor to secure.

But that fact, depressing as it is, nevertheless witnesses to the premise which has just been stated, that the preacher occupies a

strategic place in the direction of social reform. Social reform, to be successful, has always had to win the church. This, moreover, is only one side of the shield. The history which records the slowness of the church to move in the interest of social reform, records, at the same time, a list of reforms for the accomplishment of which society is overwhelmingly in debt to the church. "Your social reformer," as Professor Shailer Mathews remarks, "had best give himself a course in church history."<sup>3</sup> That list of reforms to be placed to the credit of the church will include the abolition of slavery, the progress of prohibition, the entire social, economic, educational, and personal revolution wrought by Christian missions, to say nothing of those transformations of womanhood, childhood, and domestic life which are so wrought into our civilization as to have obscured the memory of their origin. History will also record the church's invasions of the fields of social and economic injustice, by which freedoms, rights and powers have been from time to time regained for the disadvantaged many. "Every now and then the gospel strikes the earth under the feet of the common man, and he

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<sup>3</sup> Mathews: *The Church and the Changing Order*, p. 168. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

rises up and demands to be counted as one.”<sup>4</sup>  
This part of the record must also be read.

It goes without saying that not all the strategy of the preacher's position as regards the direction of social reform is due to the preacher himself. There are positions—and his is one of them—which give to their occupants far larger influence than the occupants themselves would have. The preacher's effectiveness in influencing social reform is due, first of all, to the fact that he represents the sources of that spirit which most impels reform, and that he can practically affect in large measure the resources by which organized reform is permanently supported. What is called the social passion, apart from the separated institutions through which it works, derives from the church. It is the Christian message which has resulted in the Christian ethics. Though social movements have emphasized humanitarian rather than religious ideals, and the church gives precedence to religious rather than humanitarian motives, there is no humanitarianism worth the name which has not originated in religion and no religion congenial to the present day which is not humanitarian in its practical expression.

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<sup>4</sup>Taylor: *Religion in Social Action*, p. 174. Used by permission of Dodd, Mead and Company, publishers.

The nobler practical impulses of the day are moving in one direction. It is the preacher whose interpretation of the gospel identifies it with immediate life, whose exposition of the New Testament, whatever may be its personal applications, discloses social responsibility, who inspires and instructs men and women in the obligations of human relationship. It is in the preacher's prophetic function that the social appeal finds its most dependable and constant reenforcement.

In addition, it is the men and women to whom the preacher speaks prophetically week after week, with whom he daily associates in influential intimacies, who supply the largest share of the money, time, and service which maintain the movements of reform. The preacher associates with these men and women in relationships at once of intelligence and emotion. He is constantly making those fleeting contacts which have always played so large, though unreported, a part in the awakening of ideals and the molding of character; and his influence upon their social attitudes is beyond estimate. Withdraw the sympathy of the Protestant churches from any philanthropic community enterprise involving sustained effort and personal sacrifice, and its failure is immediate. It is the wise preacher



who realizes these facts, not simply that he may know the power for good which is in his keeping, but that he may not entertain too high an opinion of his personal influence and opportunity disassociated from the church.

It is his relation to the church which gives the preacher the high seat which he may occupy in the councils of the community. The history of society supports the assertion that in the larger developments of social policy, program, and organization no voice speaks with more authority, no mind works from more advantageous position than the preacher's. No man is welcomed with more sincere good will than that with which he is welcomed to his community's comradeship of social good. To muster the men who are leading the great social campaigns which characterize the present day, is to assemble a host of Christian ministers. Their pulpits are dynamic with the social gospel while giving full place to the demands of worship, of consolation, and of faith. Their pastoral contacts, while lacking nothing of that personal sympathy which makes them comrades of the inner life, are informed with the spirit of a wider fellowship. It is their attitude which thus sets the standard for a multitude that looks to them for guidance; and it is with more than individual

usefulness that they take their place in the movements of social reform. With them they bring the sympathy, the support, the convictions of a host whom they cannot but represent.

The preacher has this influence given him by reason of his position as the administrative head of a church, by his place in its pulpit and his life at the center of the experiences of a congregation whose representative he is. In addition he has a strategic place in the direction of social reform because of certain personal advantages. He can approach any social question, can appraise any social, industrial, or political movement, with a mind naturally in contact with all the interests involved. This does not imply that no preacher is ever prejudiced; it is to say that no intelligent preacher has any excuse for being prejudiced. No man has more swift or sure access to the truth, the misunderstandings, the diverse aims of the several parties to a social controversy, and to their unrecognized common interests, than has the preacher. No man can learn at first hand more easily than he can learn the results in actual human life of industrial operations, housing conditions, political organizations, and the like. If it be true, as is so constantly affirmed, that organized labor

is alienated from the church, it is also true that organized labor includes but about fifteen per cent of all American labor; and the vast body of men and women whose devotion carries on the church's missionary enterprises, whose personal faith blossoms in its shadow, whose sorrow finds shelter in its peace, whose lives are sustained in hope and courage and high character by the streams which flow from its altars—the vast body of its men and women are of those majorities whose labor brings them but the means of comfortable living, to whom luxury is unknown and wealth but a word. Even while organized labor is alienated from the church, it is the preacher who solemnizes its weddings, baptizes its children, and buries its dead; and the preacher may know its life, its thought, its fears, its passions, its spirit of resignation and of revolt, as no other man.

At the same time it is the preacher who sits down on equal terms, socially, with those against whose wealth and power organized labor draws fast its lines of antagonism. His very familiarity with the life and mood of labor makes him significant to capital. Not all preachers have recognized the strategy of their position. Ministers of churches composed of working men and their families and

those whose kinship in economies and thrift make, with them, a social unit, have often failed to realize that their opportunity for broad and intimate knowledge of that social unit gives them singular importance and influence, if tactfully asserted, in the minds of industrial and corporation heads, political leaders, and all who seriously interest themselves in social concerns. Preachers in whose congregations wealth, poverty, and the average and well-to-do alike sit—and such congregations are more common than exceptional—have the prophetic authority by which they may speak with the directness of Nathan to the personal responsibilities which need to be inspired, restrained, or rebuked. All that is demanded is that they shall speak out of knowledge instead of sentimentality, and shall not be led by their humane enthusiasms into partisanship which cannot be sustained by facts. For the social facts are more easily secured than the common distortion of them in the press and on the platform would indicate. There is no Central Labor Union in America, one dare say, to which a preacher would not be voted a welcome, and in which he would not be given the privilege of the floor. There is no Board of Trade or Commercial Club, or similar civic organization, as there is no fra-

ternal order, in which the preacher may not take his place side by side with the banker or the business man. His influence in the concerns of a community grows thus out of his broad contacts; and it is his amplitude of experience which speaks in the counsels of practical affairs. Charles Lamb somewhere asks the question, "Have we never heard an old preacher in the pulpit display such an insight into the mystery of ungodliness as made us wonder with reason how the good man came by it?" But without confirming Lamb's subtle implication as to how the good man came by it, only an insight into the actual life of his world gives any man the right to speak concerning that world.

There are two preachers who exercise no effective influence in social reform. The first is the preacher whose eyes are turned wholly upon his church and his responsibilities within it, and fails to see what movements are passing beyond his parish lines. Walter Bagehot has written of Guizot that when he walks the street he seems to see nothing. "There have been revolutions in his life, and he is scarcely the wiser."<sup>5</sup> There are preachers who walk thus through a city's streets, seeing nothing, ignor-

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<sup>5</sup> Bagehot: *Shakespeare, the Man*, p. 4. Used by permission of Doubleday, Page & Co., publishers.

ant of revolutions around them. On the other hand there is the preacher who seeks what he calls first-hand knowledge, in ways which discredit both the knowledge which he acquires and his purpose in acquiring it. He too fails to exercise any permanent influence in social reform. There are extremes of experience into which a preacher dare not go. Frederick O'Brien, in his *White Shadows in the South Seas*, tells of a native doctor whose surgical knowledge was unusually correct because he knew the location of the vital organs accurately from having frequently cut up bodies for eating. One might rely on such professional knowledge, but nevertheless one would prefer the services of a surgeon whose ability had been acquired in more orthodox if less personal fashion. There are preachers whose insight into social ungodliness has been derived from intimate association; but they speak with little authority. They entertain, but they do not enlighten; they gratify curiosity concerning an underworld, but they do not awaken consecration to a wholesome social task.

In between these two extreme types is the preacher whom the world knows, hears, and is ready to heed; the preacher whose knowledge of his world is based upon reasonable and

intimate experience but whose character as preacher is never lost in his clamorous professions of reformer. In a cemetery at Brighton, England, is a monument to Frederick Robertson, who, though dead at thirty-seven, was one of the great prophets of social righteousness and, according to Dean Stanley, the greatest English preacher of his age. On that monument are two panels, one representing him preaching to his own people; the other representing him as teaching a company of workingmen whom he has called "Brother Men and Fellow Workmen." There are few Robertsons in present-day pulpits, but he and the monument above his grave suggest the position of the preacher and those personal advantages which give him strategic place in the direction of social reform.

But the preacher also draws his influence in the direction of social reform from yet another source. By training, by habits of insight and thought, he faces frankly and dare assert without equivocation the inadequacy of reform which deals only with institutions. By experience and observation the preacher cannot fail to realize that social discontent, whatever may be its contemporary objects, is as old as the human heart. Centuries before Christ the great pessimist of the Scriptures wrote,

“That which is crooked cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.” “He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase.” Eight hundred years ago the Persian cynic phrased the same spirit:

“Ah Love! Could you and I with Him conspire  
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
Would we not shatter it to bits—and then  
Remold it nearer to the Heart's Desire!”

The preacher, who does not forget the antiquity of discontent, knows that its sources are not alone in conditions, but in character as well; and he can exercise an effective, if not immediately recognized influence in social reform, because he can easiest keep in view the ultimate objectives of reformation. He knows that institutions can never be reformed; that only men and women can be reformed. He knows that while society and its organizations must be regenerated, that is possible and permanent only as the men and women who compose society and command its organizations are regenerated. He knows that the spirit of men, the spirit revealed in the great hours of life; the spirit discerned, as the preacher discerns it, in their disciplines of suffering, discovered, as the preacher discovers



it, in their tragedies of grief, exhibited, as the preacher observes it, under the influence of nature, of responsibility, of remorse, can never be permanently satisfied by reconstructing the social machinery. That machinery never quite reaches the actual man. As William James once said of modern social movements, "the precipitate element is left out." The preacher's influence may be all the more effective, though involving more difficulties in application, because he alone is likely to discriminate accurately between the character of social reform and its origin. Without doubt, what we have come to call the social passion is a product of the Christian religion; but it is not in itself Christianity. "The social needs of the age offer a very fruitful field for work, but the social passion is not a dynamic."<sup>6</sup> It is the preacher who, seeing the life of humanity under the aspect of the eternal, can most surely acclimate, amid the instruments of social reform, those inspirations of personal character without which the noblest social machinery must remain wholly mechanical, and life, though organized within the best articulated forms, remain still swept by discontent.

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<sup>6</sup> Kirk: *The Religion of Power*, p. 295. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, the George H. Doran Company.

If the author may be permitted to speak now in character, it is to record the wish that we preachers who are in the midst of life to-day had accomplished all that has been herein suggested as our opportunity. Unhappily, we have been inheritors of an older and less social ideal, and only slowly have we come to realize the modern world. It is to our successors in the present age that this strategic opportunity offers itself with peculiar insistence and admonition. It is an opportunity which has been presented to us by other preachers, some of an earlier day, some of our own time, who braved and bore criticism, misunderstanding, and the professional and personal tragedies which reward the social pioneer. What Governor Bradford quoted from an earlier historian concerning the Spaniards in America, and applied to his own Mayflower Pilgrims, may be remembered of these preachers who discovered the social opportunity which rises before us: "With their miseries they opened a way to these new-lands; and after these stormes, with what ease other men came to inhabite in them, in respect of ye calamities these men suffered."<sup>7</sup> It is an opportunity which, even in this late day, remains a frontier beyond which lie other

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<sup>7</sup> Bradford: *Journal*, p. 165.

lands as yet too little trodden. Upon it are still the frontiersman's conflicts and his scant compensations. The preachers of the present hour occupy this strategic position in the direction of social reform, but they have not always exercised their influence to the full measure of their opportunity, or to the necessity of the times. That is for the younger generation of men who are now taking their place in the long tradition of the Protestant ministry. To them the present day puts the question which Silvester Horne paraphrased from a penetrating inquiry of John Robinson as he summoned his Holland Puritans to the adventure of the new world. "Will you be content to go down to your graves with your witness undelivered, and your bravest hopes unattempted? Or will you risk something, nay everything, to translate your theories of Christian freedom into a veritable free society?"<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Horne: *The Romance of Preaching*, p. 198. Used by permission of the Fleming H. Revell Company, publishers.

## IV

### THE PREACHER AND THE CREATION OF PUBLIC OPINION

THE most significant scene ever reported in history was that of the crucifixion of Jesus between two thieves. Much has been written concerning that event, but little account has been taken of the fact that all three were there upon their crosses for defying public opinion. Jesus was crucified for being ahead of the public opinion of his time, the thieves for being behind it. The effective social force which found expression in their death was the same in each case—the force of public opinion.

Unless one has given definite thought to the subject he does not realize to what an extent his life is regulated by public opinion. We acknowledge on every hand the guidance and restraint of the past as it lengthens behind us. From it we have inherited most of our institutions, our basal laws, our conventions, our literature, and our religion. There is a certain grand solidity about them all; and we obey the laws, respect the institutions, observe the conventions, cherish the literature, and

revere the religion. They, at least, are the fixed and durable framework of life. But when one begins to investigate them and their origins he discovers that they are but the organized public opinion of the past. Public opinion, pushing down through time like a mole beneath the surface of the ground, throws up these various forms of thoughts and things and leaves them standing through centuries of usefulness and, sometimes, for generations after their usefulness has passed. But public opinion itself is always a living and effective force.

It is, for instance, the one support of government. Someone has said that revolution is democracy turning over in bed; but it would be truer to say that revolution is democracy persuaded or tricked into turning a hand-spring. The effectiveness of law does not depend upon judicial systems of the state or upon the law-enforcement officers. The universal testimony of magistrates and officials is that no law can be enforced in a community which does not endorse the statute. The history of legislation in connection with disputed matters touching the lives, habits, and conduct of the people as a whole is that the enactment of the law must always be followed by a period, longer or shorter, during which public

opinion is educated to effectual support of the law. The statute books contain many unrepealed laws which are nevertheless as unobserved as if they had never been enacted; and it is a commonplace of everyday knowledge that there are laws affecting our daily life which are only partially enforced. The traffic law, for instance, prescribes a speed limit of fifteen miles an hour for automobiles; but the average and unrebuked speed maintained under the eye of the traffic police is from five to ten miles an hour faster than the provision of the law. Public opinion prevents the strict enforcement of the ordinance.

What is true of the state and the local community is true of the church. The church's changing social outlook is nowhere exhibited more vividly than in the contrast between some of its once rigorously maintained rules of conduct and the increasingly liberal practice on the part of its membership. Rules remain unaltered on its books, the disregard of which is universal, the enforcement of which has become impossible.

What has been termed the oil scandal in connection recently with the national government illustrates another aspect of the effectiveness of public opinion. Two members of the President's cabinet resigned, and the most

prominent candidate for the presidential nomination in the opposition party was eliminated, because of their relationship to the manipulations which resulted in the leasing of government oil lands to private interests. But in all the publicity and indignation which developed from the situation, the question which was not permitted to come into view was as to whether the leasing of the lands was not the most profitable thing for the government to do. In other words, the force of public opinion at any time does not depend upon the soundness of the public judgment. It has often been observed that prisons receive as their tenants two kinds of people—the best and the worst. “The man who defies public opinion may do so because he is a rogue, or because he is a prophet.” It goes without saying, as history has the habit of demonstrating from time to time, that a few who defy public opinion as prophets turn out to be fools; and once in a while a fool whom public opinion has flung aside as a jest is proven to have been a prophet whose wisdom would have enriched or preserved society. Accurately to judge of men and events amid the turbulence of contemporary moods is not a simple matter; which makes more significant than ever this fact that public opinion is no less effective

when it is mistaken than when it is correct. Society is suffering to-day "primarily not from unbalanced budgets and disrupted ententes but from wrong mental processes."<sup>1</sup>

It is amid this continuing yet inconstant flow of public opinion that the preacher stands and thence exercises whatever influence he may, as one of the voices that inform and direct that flow. To go further and say that his is the most advantageous voice of all the many thus involved, is not more than the truth; and it suggests a conception of the preacher altogether different from that which prevailed a generation ago. Then the preacher was presumed to be divinely indifferent to the opinions of men. His mind was supposed to be set on things above, not on things on the earth. The Christian ideal, expressed in an irreproachable phrase, was to be in the world but not of it. Sharp distinctions were then drawn between religion and mere morality, to the grave discredit of morality. Christians were accustomed to emphasize the fact that on earth they had no abiding city but rather they were only pilgrims in this world and therefore were obligated to concentrate their interests and attention upon the other world.

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<sup>1</sup>Wiggam: *The New Decalogue of Science*, p. 274. Copyright, 1922. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.



It goes almost without saying that this other-worldly attitude of which, in essence, there can be no criticism, was, in its exaggerated expression and practice, a break from the example of the great religious leaders. Luther, Knox, Wesley all found themselves in the thick of the everyday life of men, and all shaped their service and their message under the impact of contemporary events and interests. They did not lighten the emphasis upon the other world, but they recognized the reality of this world, and early learned that it is the pilgrim spirit which most makes habitable the lands through which it journeys. Few of the later schemes for what we call the socialization of religion but would be congenial with John Wesley's mind, as the record of his social outlook clearly discloses. John Knox cannot be taken out of the politics of his time without leaving his life-work unintelligible; and no frank study of Martin Luther but will find him, so far from being aloof from his practical world, to the contrary, perhaps too intimately involved in the unlovelier and over-worldly accompaniments of the Reformation. There is an unexhausted meaning in Saint Paul's observation that he became all things to all men that he might win some; not that he was a hypocritical spirit surren-

dering to every man's mood, but that he was a sagacious mind keeping touch with the currents of opinion that amid them he might present this message in contacts at once intelligible and friendly. For an example at once of his use of, and his influence upon public opinion, his address at Athens is almost if not wholly perfect.

The preacher *is* to set his mind on things above the earth. He is to be in the world and, in a very real fashion, not of it. He is to view life under the order of Eternity. But it is in living contact with the forces of public opinion that he must preserve these attitudes, and present the spiritual interpretation of his age. He dare not, then, be indifferent to the mind and mood of the age; and within the limits of his influence, which are the limits of his responsibility, if he is to be effective at all, he must contribute largely to the character of public opinion not alone on religious matters, but on other subjects also; and he must strive to influence its judgments.

It is fundamental, therefore, that the preacher know the state of public opinion in the community, whether it be a city or a town or a countryside; and equally fundamental that he be abreast of it. What is the judgment of the best and directive minds as to civic

affairs, industrial and social conditions, law enforcement and moral reform? To what extent will these minds incarnate their judgments in practical action, whether it be by speech, philanthropy, social organization, or the ballot? This is the frontier on which the preacher's mind must be at home and from which he has to speak. For there is no more pathetic spectacle than that of the belated preacher; one who, in a day of industrial democracy, is thinking in Victorian terms of unorganized labor and aristocratic privilege; who, in a day of vivid social responsibilities, is preaching a gospel of wholly individual salvation; who, in a day which emphasizes duty, is discoursing of religion as a philosophy of escape. In a day when the progress of biology is popularized until it is remaking the minds of reading men and women everywhere; when the high schools are familiarizing young people with electrons and amœbæ; when the radio is pouring the life of the world into the sitting rooms of the farmhouse and the village as well as the city; the preacher who cannot speak intelligently in respect of science, who cannot respond intelligently to the political perplexities raised by the events of this world, will speak with little effect when he discusses other worlds, of which it may reasonably be

doubted whether he knows any more. His knowledge and his outlook upon life must keep pace with the best minds of his community.

But if the belated preacher is a spectacle of pathos, the too progressive preacher is an exhibition of futility. He may be a prophet, but he will draw wages as a fool. He may furnish entertainment, but he will provide no leadership. This is not to say that he will be mistaken. He may be correct in his views, precise in his judgments, informed as to his facts. But if these views, judgments, and facts are too far removed from the mental habit of his public they might just as well be mistaken, as far as their usefulness is concerned. Indeed, they might better be mistaken; because many a stoned prophet may be suspected of having earned his shower by the persistent folly with which he disregarded the simple proprieties of common sense. No one knew this more surely than Jesus who is quoted as saying to his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

While the preacher must thus live upon the frontier of the public opinion of his community, whether it be a city or a circuit; while he must not range in public utterance

too far beyond its conventional boundaries; he must always be open minded to the world of knowledge, feeling and adventure which expands beyond it. It is his established residence on the certain, well-known territories of the public opinion of his time and place which, when he goes out into those new lands, gives to his community confidence to follow toward larger knowledge, faith, and action. For there come times when the preacher must go out beyond the public opinion of his community. Much has been made, and properly, in honor of Samuel Hopkins, that stalwart New England preacher who uttered probably the first public protest in America against slavery. His congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, was composed principally of men whose business interests and prosperity derived from the slave trade; yet on a notable Sunday morning Samuel Hopkins "delivered a testimony" which his conscience could not evade, that slavery was un-Christian and iniquitous. One can imagine the effect produced by such an utterance; and one cannot avoid the fact that whatever influence the utterance had was dependent upon the measure to which Samuel Hopkins had kept pace with, neither behind nor in advance of, the economic opinion of his time. To every preacher will come a time

when he must deliver a testimony in advance of the public opinion of his congregation and much of his community, and his success will depend upon the close and sympathetic fellowship which his mind has had with the common mind around him. Let a preacher who has been belated come surprisingly to some new and advanced light, and his contemporaries will say that he is probably as far wrong in this forward direction as he has been customarily mistaken in the other. Let a preacher who has been ordinarily too advanced announce a new, though ever so true word of admonition and invitation, and his contemporaries will remark that he was always trying to be different. But let a preacher who has been fully abreast of his contemporary world and local situation, who has always shaped his pronouncements courageously and yet so as to arouse no reasonable resentment in the directive minds around him—let such a preacher advocate a new advance, scientific or social, confirmed by some cogency of fact, and presented in tactful and commanding form, and men and women who hesitate to accept his leading in this particular occasion, will nevertheless find themselves saying: "He has always been reasonable; there may be something in this which we do not see. It is from

such beginnings that social, intellectual, political progress obtains.”

The preacher's place amid the currents of public opinion imposes one certain obligation upon him. He must not only be responsive to public opinion, abreast of it, and doing his work within the ranges of its impact; he must mold it. For this he has the inestimable advantage of a place and a platform, a vocation and an office to which society is accustomed to pay deference. To him, by nineteen centuries of tradition, men and women look for direction, not alone spiritual, but intellectual as well; if indeed, there can be any spiritual direction which is not also intellectual. Current literature—fiction, journal, essay, public address—is clamorous with the charge that the pulpit has lost its place in the intellectual life of men; that the world no longer pays attention to the opinions of the preacher. It is not for any one to venture *ex cathedra* judgment on so broad a scale; but personal observation seldom confirms the charge. When one has taken into account the intellectual shortcomings of the clergy, discarding everything in the public attitude which might seem to be an illusion of deference to, or an assumption of respect for a clerical opinion, which in reality was but a show of courtesy; then he

will still be the more astonished at the weight which the general public attaches to the judgment of preachers who command a hearing, though it be but little beyond their parish lines. The very vigor with which a preacher's utterances are sometimes denounced, and never more vigorously than when they are completely misunderstood, is unmistakable evidence of the importance which the preacher's utterances carry with them. This may well breed in him a noble caution that his pronouncements shall be so grounded in truth and supported by reason and informed with moral purpose as to be worthy the hearing they receive. But it also imposes the necessity of a fine courage as well, and suggests this very range of duty lying imperatively within the broader circumference of his commission. In a larger and more socially effective manner than the apostle had in mind, the preacher is to cast down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

This is recognized at once as a service akin to that which the preacher accomplishes in his interpretation of his age; but it has even more positive character. The preacher may be a wise and faithful interpreter of the currents



of thought, the movements, events, and tendencies of the day in which he lives, and yet not appreciably mold the public opinion of his place and time. There are innumerable books, for instance, which instruct the mind but nevertheless do not alter its attitude nor remove its presuppositions concerning the things in which it is instructed. There are many men whose antagonism to the democratic ideals of labor is more intense since they have become accurately informed concerning them, than it was before they knew what those ideals involve. There are Christian men of irreproachable sincerity who are as violent in their condemnation of the more liberal conceptions of religion as they were when those conceptions were but nebulous or a name. It is not enough, in other words, that the public understand what facts are and what they mean; its mental attitude toward those facts and that meaning must frequently be rearranged. Just as children are frightened at false faces even when they know who is behind them, so there are men and women instinctively hostile to new forms of ideal and purpose, though they are mentally acquainted with the truth those ideals and purposes seek to express. Public opinion is not simply an expression of intellectual judgment; it is

largely an expression of feeling, standardized by inherited attitudes and preconceptions which have survived the older mental and moral customs in which originally they found sanction. The preacher has failed of one of his most important and productive opportunities if, after a reasonable length of time, his congregation and that wider following which he has beyond his immediate congregation, have not begun, to some extent, to reflect his outlook upon the concerns of life. This is not to say that they shall think wholly as he does, but that their approaches to personal judgment shall be from viewpoints adopted, though perhaps unconsciously, from him; that they shall be thinking in directions caught, perhaps unintentionally, through the contagion of his thinking.

There are three areas of intellectual interest, each inexorably productive in practical life, in which particularly the present-day preacher has the opportunity and must exercise the purpose of molding the public opinion of his community. The first of these naturally is that of religious belief and discussion. Notwithstanding the superficial accusation so frequently brought against our generation, namely, that it has lost interest in religion, there are few if any considerations in which

it is more vitally engaged. Whether one has in mind the stupendous budgets of the churches, involving sums of money beyond the imagination of the most enthusiastic churchman of a generation ago; or the eager hearing which all exponents of strange faiths are given, from the melodious platitudes of Tagore to the dull futilities of Sir A. Conan Doyle; or whether one is concerned with the tumult of debate which has added fundamentalism to our vocabulary and introduced the comic spirit into our theology; our day is profoundly interested in religious considerations. Without much advertisement of the word, though, it must be confessed, with some prehistoric survivals of the substance, theology has come to be once more a prime concern with multitudes of men and women. While this may have been more accentuated, in very recent years, than ordinarily, yet it is a constant fact with which the preacher has to deal. Continually waves of special religious interest move across the mental life of the nation, aroused by some new propaganda, or stirred by some new attack upon traditional belief, or quickened by some revolt or inquiry of the public mind in the face of fresh catastrophe. To none of these dare the preacher be indifferent. They are forces having practical effect

upon the work to which he is called. They disintegrate the traditional attitudes upon which he has to work, they erect new barriers or open new gates to the complete evangel he has to bring. One can hardly imagine the pathos when, following the casualties of the war, there occurs a great revival of spiritualism; and charlatans by the thousand capitalize the sorrow of a people and wreck for multitudes the once sound structures of Christian faith and hope. One dare not underestimate the undramatic but insidious disintegrations of the ideas and moralities which have built our civilization around the home, by the suave paganism of Oriental minds, become too easily a passing but decadent cult. Some years ago, to carry the illustration in a slightly different direction, there was a widespread discussion, on lecture platforms and in the public press, of the question, Is life worth living? The question itself raises the doubt; and it was morbidly interesting to observe that where the discussion emphasized the element of doubt, it was followed by an increase in the number of suicides. How closely related to the public mind the preacher is, and how significant is his opportunity, finds more recent evidence in the prohibition which Roman Catholic clergy are trying to make effective,

admonishing their communicants against listening, by radio, to Protestant religious services.

Interpreting the age does not meet the opportunity thus surveyed; and the direction of social reform by no means completely satisfies it. It is not enough that the preacher inform his congregation that the revival of spiritualism is a natural reaction after the casualties of war. It is not enough that he trace the invasion of America by pagan lecturers and pagan literature to the curiosity of minds satiated with monotony—a curiosity reenforced also, as far as the lecturers are concerned, by the financial incentives which operate under cover of the cultural passion. The preacher must remold the mind of his congregation upon the sounder philosophies and ampler implications of the Christian doctrine of immortality; he must illumine the durable and indispensable principles of Christian society and life by which alone our western civilization has proved its superiority to the East.

In the present-day discussion between those who miscall themselves fundamentalists and those who have been labeled modernists, the preacher of every pulpit has one unmistakable duty, a duty which becomes, indeed, his abiding joy. It is not necessary that he join in the

warfare over the specific doctrines in dispute. It is necessary—and many a preacher is discovering it to be the opportunity for which he has been waiting—that out of the specific debates he take occasion to shape the mind of his congregation and community into right attitudes toward religious development. It is his supreme opportunity, in such a time as this, to mold his public opinion to support freedom of thinking, to register unhesitant loyalty to truth, to conscience and to character; to recognize that the details which divide our religious theories and thought, inherited as they may be in ever so ancient a tradition, are negligible beside the indubitable devotion of the religious life.

A second area of intellectual interest, productive in practical life, is that of social ideals and purposes. Here also the preacher has his advantaged and imperative place for the creation of public opinion. Reference has already been made to the preacher's strategic position in the direction of social reform; but it is to be remembered that no social reform will progress beyond the limit to which public opinion is in its favor. It is the preacher's opportunity and his obligation as well, as perhaps it is no other's, to keep public opinion, on the one hand, moving forward to the support

of adequate and permanent reform, and, on the other, to hold it back from reenforcing those radical innovations and unsound social readjustments the end of which must be the failure which disillusioned where it does not disrupt, and that alienates the public mind from legitimate reforms which, undefeated, would effect enduring social good. It has recently been remarked that "We charge the artist with the double responsibility of creating both his art and his audience."<sup>2</sup> It is as truthfully to be said of the preacher in his relation to the social implications of religion and the social expression of religion. He has not only to be effective in the interpretation of the one and the direction of the other; he has to create the public opinion which will enforce and maintain them.

In this is to be recognized not only a grave responsibility upon the preacher of to-day, but one of the subtlest and most fatal of the perils which menace his influence. A notable English churchman has lately been criticized in an anonymous and, therefore, not very creditable volume, on the ground that his sermons "proclaim rather the social energy of a good citizen than the fervent zeal of an apostle on

<sup>2</sup>Wiggam: *New Decalogue of Science*, p. 130. Copyright, 1922. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

fire with his Master's message."<sup>3</sup> The criticism itself is of small value because it may so easily represent the stock dissatisfaction of a conventional mind positive that there is no fire where it cannot stereotype the blaze. One may be on fire with his Master's message, while he is attacking the too common alliance between a police department and protected vice, or debating the coordination of a city's philanthropic agencies. But there is nevertheless a very real peril that, in the preacher's eagerness to mold public opinion toward certain social interests and sympathies, he shall lose the one note which gives his voice its only carrying power. It is only because any truth about God is social; because, in other words, any social good has its roots in religious obligation, that the preacher has responsibility for shaping, to the utmost of his opportunity, the public opinion of his time and place. In fulfilling that responsibility is one of the profounder compensations of the preacher's risk and labor. There are few hours more inspiring or more sobering than that in which it is disclosed to him that, here and there, through his congregation and his community, productive minds are being kindled to something of

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<sup>3</sup> *Painted Windows*, p. 93f. By a Gentleman With a Duster. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers, New York and London.



his social outlook, and slowly a reckonable mental habit begins to rise in the directions he has proclaimed.

The preacher has the opportunity, and upon him is the responsibility of creating public opinion in a third area of interest: that which, for lack of a more precise phrase, may be called the area of national policy. This obligation is now rising, for the first time, into general recognition; though in times of grave emergency this duty of the preacher's to shape public opinion in what is called the right direction has been accepted even by men and women who fiercely resent any pulpit utterance which seems to impinge upon the conventional interests of national life. What is patriotism in war has not yet been able to escape the charge of partisanship in peace. But now men are beginning to see that, whatever may be the risk of misunderstanding, the pulpit must speak on those great public interests which form so large a part of the intellectual and social habit of the nation.

That is taken for granted and widely practiced in the pulpits of war times. One of the elements in our national experience during the recent war, an element which, as we look back on it, raises the most serious questioning in the minds of many, was the unanimity with

which the Protestant pulpits lent themselves to propaganda inspired and supplied by the national government. They reinterpreted the history of the German people in terms of avarice, cruelty, and force. They exalted the services of France to the American colonies a hundred and forty years earlier, and the generous friendship of British seamen at the time of friction between the American and German fleets at Manila during the war with Spain. They suppressed all recollection of the rasping contacts with France which have not been wholly absent from American history, and were nobly silent concerning British and American relations during the Civil War. Preachers who were too old to enter the army were relentless in their enthusiasm for the war; finding their support for the crusade, as they called it, in the New Testament and even in the words of Christ. This is not written in any criticism of the temper into which preachers and laymen alike were flung by the sinking of ships, the reported atrocities, and the whole tempest of indignation which swept around them from events abroad and pro-Germanism at home. It is simply illustrating the fact that in these times of national emergency the preacher has always contributed effectively to the creation of public opinion.

It is the same part which he has now to play in forming the opinion of his public toward equally vital, though less dramatic, courses of national action in times of peace. It belongs to him, more than to any other man, to create the public sentiment which will accomplish strict enforcement of law. It belongs to him, as to no other man, to further in the general public those national tendencies and aims which will reduce the friction from certain international contacts. He alone can effectively link the great nonpartisan political enterprises with those moral impulses and moral imperatives which appeal alike to all men. He alone can effectively support great moral purposes in government and diplomacy, by disclosing their unrecognized sources in spiritual ideals, and by reenforcing their ethics with the authority of religion. To be once more specific: It is the preacher who, to-day and in the generation just ahead, will be the most powerful voice, the most compelling influence, in the creation of that public mind and ideal and conscience and conviction which, to use a phrase but lately coined, will outlaw war.

Other great causes, of course, suggest themselves, which need not be specified here. Others will rise from time to time to face the

nation with the duty of deeper insight, and to summon the preacher to new prophetic enterprises. The years through which we are passing are turbulent with the fate of nations, the future of peoples, the hopes of humankind. Only as the host of conflicting passions hear constantly some "deeper voice across the storm," only as they are merged into a common moral and social purpose, can there be wrought that tranquil culture, that just and satisfying government, that generous democracy of ideal and life, which can shelter and sustain the generations of men. Only wise and patient guidance of the common mind can so much as begin that unifying of our now discordant life. By tradition, by place, by opportunity, it is the preachers who best offer that guidance, and who most surely can create the public opinion in which that unity will find itself at home. Because what James Russell Lowell wrote of the poets is proudly true of the preachers who are called of God and look out upon the world of time in the light of their commission:

"It is they

Who utter wisdom from the central deep,  
And, listening to the inner flow of things,  
Speak to the age out of eternity."

## V

### THE PREACHER AND THE PRESENT HOUR

IN the preceding pages and in these which follow, a certain character has been assumed as inhering in the Christian ministry, which has not been emphasized in recent years perhaps as strongly as in other generations. It is its character as a special vocation, not simply an occupation which the preacher chooses but, rather, a cause and call which capture him. One may fairly say that the minister who does not feel as the profound compulsion of his life, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel," has no warrant for his ministry and no word for the present hour. But the true preacher comes to a world to-day which waits, in spite of itself, for a disclosure which only he can bring. This is the hour of opportunity for the prophetic insight and the proclaiming voice.

This involves an unmistakable estimate of the preacher's quality and place. It is not as condescendingly regarded as it once was, for all the criticism which continues to beat upon

both the man and his office. Charles Lamb described the Reverend John Mitford as "a pleasant layman spoiled." The eighteenth-century parson was half chaplain, half drudge, who left the squire's table before dessert and as Macaulay wrote, "stood aloof till he was summoned to return thanks for the repast, from a greater part of which he had been excluded." Only sixty years ago Thomas Wentworth Higginson recorded in his journal that he had stopped during an afternoon's walk, to read the notices posted at a tollgate, and the last of them was "Clergymen and Funerals Gratis." Notwithstanding clerical discounts which ought in all honor to be abolished, there is little left of that old-time patronizing of the preacher. Governor Bradford's history of the Plymouth plantation preserves a letter written by the company agent describing certain men and stuff sent out in 1623; in which is the frank remark that "The preacher we have sent is (we hope) an honest plaine man, though none of ye most eminente and rare"; which is about as far as any deprecatory observations to-day can truly go. That the contemporary criticism of him is so clamorous is no slight tribute to the preacher's strength. Its very turbulence argues the impact which he is making.

That is but another way of saying that the world estimates the preacher, as it does its other servants, at about the value they demonstrate in themselves. One dare not be unmindful of the fact that many preachers are ineffective in life and incompetent in service. Dr. Samuel McChord Crothers has remarked of the clergymen of modern fiction that one can hear their souls scrape; and if that cannot be said of preachers in actual life, yet no one will deny Dr. George A. Gordon's charge against some of their number that a mean kind of retail trade has taken possession of them. But at most these more ignoble members of a noble order are negligible. "A middlin' doctor is a pore thing, and a middlin' lawyer is a pore thing; but keep me from a middlin' man of God."<sup>1</sup> The future does not belong to him. That is the attitude of the world in general. What remains to be said concerns itself, accordingly, with that greatening company of men, disciplined in mind, dedicated in life, ample in knowledge, eager and unaffrighted in the face of new truth, at home in the affairs of other men and not unacquainted with the secret place of God; who look out upon the world of time in the light of eternity; who

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<sup>1</sup>Wister: *The Virginian*, p. 214. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

hear, amid the tumult of the hour, the tranquil admonition of the centuries; and who, challenged alike by the seductions of expediency and the attractions of the profitable and pleasant, declare without compromise for that which is right. The future *does* belong to them. For society, swept with doubt and cynical in its ferment, storms secure within the uncrumbled defenses of spiritual ideal and moral sanction and restraint, because the preacher, whose commission comes from higher than any times or all occasions, still declares, amid shifting opinions and interests that fade, the mighty verities by which men live.

For such a preacher as has just been indicated, this is the hour of opportunity because the world to-day is defeated by the inertia of its knowledge, and the preacher offers it the dynamic of a moral passion. There can be no question as to what Professor Erskine has called the moral obligation to be intelligent; but one of the salutary achievements which the age has yet to accomplish is the recognition of the limits within which intelligence alone has value. Knowledge may add a new quality to enthusiasm; it may provide a base for adventurous curiosity; it may offer an asylum for the timid mind on which the spectacle of actual life breaks with too confusing



an impact; but it may nevertheless be very far from wisdom, and it is not in itself the energy which sustains. "I arrived at Oxford," wrote Edward Gibbon, "with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a Doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy would have been ashamed." It is obvious to remark that in the sheer accumulation of knowledge the present day exceeds any period of time before it. The disclosures made in the realm of natural science, and the application of scientific knowledge to practical enterprise, the tabulation of facts, vital statistics in the interest of public health, the definite results of historical criticism and the rediscovery of the past by scholarship and exploration, the universe of ghosts which introspection has discerned inhabiting the enigma of personality—all these and more, the commonplaces of the intelligent interest of the day, constitute a store of knowledge such as no previous generation anticipated. The effect has been unmistakable. No little of the bold hopes, the buoyant forecasts of inevitable social progress, the unrestrained confidence in the automatic improvement of human affairs, with which men indulged their yesterday, were due to the impression made on acquiescent minds by this accumulation of knowledge. It is the inertia

of it all which is now so bewildering. Men know so much but seem to be no more. History repeats with recurrent emphasis that of all cunningly devised fables, none is more fabulous than that knowledge is power. Knowledge may offer direction, it may inspire effort, it may discipline motive, but power springs elsewhere.

No poets come to us with the erudition of Dante and Milton, so that to cite them in illustration will disarm suspicion that any discrediting of knowledge is implied. In sheer intellectual accumulation and range, they are masters of their times. But of Dante, whose knowledge is fused into the most spacious and enduring art, one of his penetrating critics has written that the true secret of his strange power is not in his art, but in his spirit; and "What you owe to Milton," said De Quincey, "is not any knowledge; what you owe is power." In connection with the latter it is significant also that the most intelligent and capacious figure in "Paradise Lost" is Satan; so that as Professor Erskine has observed, perfectly moral readers may fear lest Milton may have known good and evil, but could not tell them apart. What Dr. Fosdick some time ago remarked of science in particular may be equally well said of the accumulations of

knowledge in general which characterize contemporary life. When they have given us all their power, we still need another kind of power which it is not the business of knowledge to supply.

This is not merely an academic discussion. It takes practical hold upon the sinister impasse to which society seems to have come in Europe and which seems threatening the world. Signor Nitti, the Italian statesman, said to Mr. Philip Kerr at San Remo: "There is a difference between you English-speaking peoples and us Continentals. . . . Your civilization, your politics, rest upon moral ideas; ours on intellectual." Circumstances permit one to entertain less lofty opinions of our English-speaking peoples; for it is necessary only to turn to the letters of Walter Hines Page to read that at the time of the Mexican Revolution, some decade ago, in all the columns of newspaper comment with which he was compelled to familiarize himself, he did not see even an allusion to any moral principle involved, nor a word of concern for the Mexican people. It was all about who was the stronger, Huerta or some other bandit, and about the necessity of order for the sake of financial interests. "This," the Ambassador wrote, "illustrates the complete divorce of European

politics and fundamental morals.”<sup>2</sup> While even the most patriotic observer of American public life recently could go no further than to believe the divorce between our own politics and fundamental morals is not irreparable.

This is not to question the sincere purposes of the minds which project and develop the destinies of great states; it is simply to recognize the incapacity of intelligence alone. Of Peter Stuyvesant, the *Knickerbocker History of New York* remarks that “he wanted nothing more to complete him as a statesman than to think always right.” But the statesmen of the hour need for their completion little more than to will always right. It is not new international treaties that will do the work now needed to be done; it is a new character in internationalists. Not more knowledge, but a moral passion is the answer to the necessities of the present time.

Lord Charnwood, in his penetrating study of Theodore Roosevelt, quotes an illuminating statement of President McKinley’s in connection with his decision to take the Philippines: “He ‘walked the White House night after night until midnight, and . . . went down on (his) knees and prayed to Almighty God for

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<sup>2</sup>*Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page*, Vol. I, p. 184. Used by permission of Doubleday, Page & Co., publishers.

light and guidance. . . . And one night late it came to (him) this way: (he) did not know how it was, but it came: that . . . there was nothing . . . to do but to take them all and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace to do the best we could by them as our fellow men for whom Christ died.'"<sup>3</sup>

There is the dynamic moral passion operative through a President; but it is the preacher who alone offers it commandingly amid the inertia of the world's knowledge. Many voices are calling across the wreckage of present-day desire: science, education, political expediency, commercial interest—a groping tumult of frantic, blind intent. One voice has this note of victorious constraint.

In the "Alcestis" of Euripides, Hercules comes to the home of his friend Admetus, ignorant of the tragedy which has resulted in Alcestis' death; and, kept in ignorance until after he has feasted, he learns from a servant the direful truth. Then he makes his great resolve; and to read the lines is to wonder once again at the genius which, after twenty-five centuries, can so capture imagination and awake emotion with the recital of exploits

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<sup>3</sup> Charnwood: *Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 123. Used by permission of The Atlantic Monthly Press, Inc., publishers.

which never occurred by heroes who never lived. Hercules hears from the servant that Alcestis has been carried away by death and, standing there, suddenly dignified for all the festal garlands on his head, lifts himself and says,

“O heart, O hand, great doings have ye done  
Of old: up now, and show them what a son  
Took life that hour, when she of Tiryn’s sod,  
Electryon’s daughter, mingled with her God!”<sup>4</sup>

and goes out; to return, disheveled, labored, but behind him, between two attendants, Alcestis torn from the mighty grip of Death and made to live again.

There is the preacher, meeting the tragedy of the world not with a philosophy, but with a passion; not with an accumulation of knowledge but with a divine deed. He, and he alone, shows a defeated society what a Son took life that other hour of destiny. The world recalls. “Though we crucified Christ on a stick,” George Bernard Shaw said, “he somehow managed to get hold of the right end of it; and if we were better men, we might try his plan.” The preacher, with an authority none other dare assume, declares anew the power of God

“. . . on this dark world to lighten it,  
And power on this dead world to make it live.”

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<sup>4</sup>“*The Alcestis*”; Gilbert Murray’s translation, p. 48.

“This man,” as the English Ambassador Randolph wrote from Edinburgh, concerning John Knox, “puts more life in us in one hour than six hundred trumpets blustering in our ears.”

This is the hour of opportunity for the preacher, also, because the world to-day is betrayed by the tentative character of social reform; and only the preacher can speak with authority to its conscience the effective challenge of personal obligation. The nobler result of the Wesleyan movement, wrote John Richard Green, “was the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical suffering, the social degradation of the profligate and the poor.” It is possible that this appraisal of the social results of the Wesleyan revival is accurate, but it is inapplicable to the social ideals of the churches to-day. The social creed of the churches now extends far beyond remedies, and aims at the causes of ignorance, suffering, and social degradation. It occupies no narrower purpose than that of social justice. But the fact must be remembered with increasing conviction that social reform is an inescapable part of the Christian enterprise, and that much of the serious conditions which now prevail in so-

ciety, and particularly in industry, are due to the mishandling of the social adventure which the church began.

The large and durable advantages which have come to society as a whole from the development of the social passion and the conduct of the movements for social justice are apparent. Childhood has been steadily rescued from the bitterness of premature labor. Multitudes have regained their ancient right of leisure. The margin of economic security has been accomplished for many who yesterday had no future but fear and destitution. Privacy, comfort, health, and a stake in the land have been made possible to thousands who formerly were little more than herded creatures of events and accident. Horizons have been given to men and women who heretofore had only limits. For an unreckonable host labor has ceased to mean social helplessness and has become power, while bare existence has blossomed into life. The result has been easily apparent, and almost as fatal. With the assumption of inevitable progress in its mind, and the spectacle of physical comfort and freedom before its eyes, a generation rested its expectations of the future on the mechanical relationships among men and on the adjustment of the social order to satisfy



the persistent human need. It discovered, quite to the contrary, that every improvement in the condition, the comfort, the privilege and the capacity of men, is accompanied by a commensurate enlargement of desire; that these increasing social gains pour in upon an unsatisfied discontent as the "rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full."

This betrayal, of course, goes deeper than mere discontent, however violent or revolutionary the discontent may be. Increased wages, shorter hours, the privileges of reasonable labor have not made workmen more honest in their work or more interested in the service it is presumed to render; just as increased wealth has not made rich men more just, more generous, more responsive to the rights of the public, or more ready as they are more competent to serve society. There are, of course, fewer and less biting social injustices than there were, and there will be still fewer to-morrow. The wrongs which rise from technic of organization, from class inheritances and the solidifications of ancient custom, are diminishing before the expansions of social reform. But the basal wrong largely remains, namely, the economic estimation of life itself, which is unchanged by any changes in the terms of temporal good. Society organized

around high wages is just as materialistic and incompetent as society organized around low wages. Humanity appraised in terms of comfort is as mean as humanity indicted in terms of misery. The direction of development seems to be better, but there is no terminus in sight; and there can be no satisfaction until men discern beyond the process a result which deserves and promises to be permanent. Saint John's vision of a holy city is far more reassuring than any commonwealth of closed shops or tax-exempt securities. Reform in the machineries of materialism can never satisfy the spirit. By reaction it may, on the other hand, betray men into the impotence of generalizations. As Professor Sperry has put it, "The social gospel is in a fair way to develop a breed of Christians who face every moral challenge with the evasion, 'Lord, what wilt thou have the social order do?'"<sup>5</sup>

It is the preacher who to-day thunders upon the world whose tragedies have wakened a willingness to hear what its self-assurance formerly ignored, the reliable solvent of personal obligation. One of the banners carried by the English political reformers of 1843 bore the legend, "More Pigs and Less Parsons." But

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<sup>5</sup>Sperry: *The Disciplines of Liberty*, p. 83. Used by permission of the Yale University Press.

increasingly men are discerning that the more pigs there are, the more parsons there must be; the more material prosperity, in other words, the more need there is for the repeated admonitions of the higher personal life. One of the associates of Bishop Bashford, speaking of him as a preacher, said significantly, "No matter what his subject, if he begins with the multiplication table, he will wind up with the Sermon on the Mount."<sup>6</sup> That is the prophetic logic with which the preacher is divinely commissioned, and of which he is authentically possessed; and men turn, as has been observed, "to the gospel of Galilee with renewed interest because the gospel of Manchester has proved such a shabby substitute."

This is not to be taken for something of that unctuous optimism which so frequently makes the children of light seem more ludicrous than illumined, the optimism which takes for granted that the world is crowding to the reproach of Christ. It is not necessary to accept Dean Inge's cynical declaration that Christianity will never be acceptable to the majority, in order to acknowledge that men are not hurrying to the altars of the church as doves to the windows. The preacher comes to the challenge of the social mood to-day, not

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<sup>6</sup>Grose: *James W. Bashford*, p. 65f.

as a shepherd singing to a willing flock, but as a prophet declaring inexorable and commanding truth to a generation whose betrayals drive it to hear him. Around him is the tumult, but in his voice is thunder; and "God be thanked who has matched us with this hour!"

This is the hour of opportunity for the preacher, furthermore, because the world to-day is imperiled by its perversions of liberty; and the preacher proclaims with searched and questioned, but impregnable sanctions, the productive securities of law. The author of a recent historical study, calling attention to the fact that civilization has reached its present stage only after a long and hazardous mental journey, makes the arresting remark that its achievements and hopes of greater things are now largely in the hands of men and women who know little of that hazardous journey and have no clear idea of their own responsibility toward the future of mankind. That is a historian's way of referring to the very evident dangers of democracy, the incapacity of majorities, and the untrustworthy impulses of the crowd. It also suggests, perhaps, some reason for what must be patent to any thoughtful observer of contemporary life—its mood of fretful independence, its dis-

regard of old restraints, its rejection of the disciplines of conduct, relationship, and desire, all of which are features in and factors of these yeasty times. What Thomas Carlyle wrote eighty years ago remains still true. "Brethren, we know but imperfectly yet, after ages of Constitutional Government, what Liberty and Slavery are."

To a thoughtful mind the contemporary world presents aspects of revolution, no less significant because sheer force of arms, on any universal scale, is, as yet, but a figure very dim amid the shadows. Here, for instance, is the newer criticism, analyzing the making of mind, and apparently mistaking disintegration for deliverance; assuring the inquiring present that the only meaning of the past is that it has no meaning whatever. Here is a practical psychology exhibiting the secret places of the heart in order to demonstrate that the baser passions are the deepest and most authoritative disclosures of life's character and intent; and that the glory of personal experience is to escape from the restraints which differentiate humanity from the beasts. Here, also, is a new liberalism in religion; not the reverent and cultured liberty of a Christian man which, while lacking the evangelical fervors, has given to Protestantism a grate-

ful sweetness and light ; but, rather, a blatant denial of the older imperatives of religion, an indifference to the sanctions of millenniums of spiritual insight proven in noble living ; a noisy insolence of thought and feeling in revolt against the austere admonitions of experience. While across the broad landscapes of social, industrial, and political concern comes storming up the menace of the armed class war.

The strength of the danger draws from the passion to which this revolutionary mood appeals, the high and hallowed prerogative of freedom which it invokes. The inviolable independence of the personal spirit, the right to express one's life unimpeded by the restraints of ancient custom or inherited prudence, or social conventions which have survived the occasions which first gave them sanction—these are the principles on behalf of which the elder inhibitions are battered down by the pressure of indulgences which history does not authorize and experience has not confirmed. In thought, in life, in labor, in the realms of faith and order, the world seems to have accepted an arrogance of unrestraint for the proud but humble pursuit of just responsibility which is the true pledge of liberty. Men have become so obsessed with freedom that they have forgotten what they are free to do.

They are so engaged with their independence that they are slaves to the transient hour. They are so eager to be themselves that they fail often to be right. As Principal Forsyth put it, they have been brandishing liberty instead of exercising service. That imperial sobriety with which men once accepted, as a chrism, the solemn opportunity of self-direction, has been lost in the uninformed selfishness which admits no master and acknowledges no God.

It is to this hour that the preacher comes with one prophetic and, ultimately, inescapable reality to which society and individual thought alike must return. Amid the wavering accents of legislation which has failed and legislators who are frightened; amid the acid irreverence of the criticism which would crumble the reproachful past and the profane selfishness which disintegrates the nobler possibilities of the present; amid the pessimism which identifies narrowness with zeal and ignorance with orthodoxy, and cries mournfully of vanished times—amid them all the authentic preacher stands declaring the one reality in which liberty and law are synthesized in effective life.

One of the luminous though little remembered portraits in English literature is that of

the father of the Brontë sisters, led into his pulpit and standing there, "a gray sightless old man, his blind eyes looking straight out before him," while his words keep falling with all the force and vigor of his best days. There is a mystic, seerlike atmosphere which haunts that portrait and suggests something of the noblest qualities of the preaching ministry. But there is another figure more apt as an illustration of the preacher of to-day: George Whitefield, as Dr. S. Parkes Cadman characterizes him, who "had the art of mingling the infinite with the commonplace, which is one requisite of effective preaching." Of Whitefield, Dr. Cadman writes that "he exalted God until everything pertaining to law, duty, and conduct became strangely solemn and momentous."<sup>7</sup> Not otherwise will law, duty, and conduct become solemn and momentous now; and it is the preacher alone who challenges and checks and eventually will rectify the perversions of liberty with the subduing recognition of a rediscovered God.

Finally, also, if a paragraph may be devoted to what might engage a chapter, the preacher finds the present age his hour of opportunity because, amid the progress of knowledge, the

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<sup>7</sup> Cadman: *Ambassadors of God*, p. 69. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.



programs of social readjustment, the inspirations of expanding freedom, to him alone has been committed the ministry of consolation. What has just been said has dealt with the more heroic aspects of his vocation and life, amid which the preacher stands as a commanding and strategic figure on a wide-flung battlefield. But it is not to be forgotten that on every battlefield are many casualties. Men are not yet done with what Walter Pater called "the stream of human tears always falling through the shadows of the world." There are a hundred altering experiences of disillusionment, but the tragedy of suffering, loss, and sorrow remains basally single and unchanged. One cannot apprehend the world as it is to-day and leave out of account the wistful anguish of a generation which, by war and pestilence augmenting the procession of mortality, has been driven to storm the gates of mystery to learn what landscape lies beyond its graves. The prominence of a renascent spiritualism, and the response which it has received, ornamented, as it has been, by eminent intelligences and eloquent of noble names, does not argue simply the multiplication of curious minds, but, rather, the eagerness of broken hearts in whose bewilderment knowledge has proven inadequate and faith

too dim. Amid their sorrows men and women still "stretch out their hands in love of that farther shore," discovering anew that no mere continuity of existence or of consciousness from which moral significance and a personal God alike are absent, can satisfy their illimitable griefs.

But as Charlotte Brontë wrote, "there are some consolations . . . too fine for the ear not fondly and forever to retain their echo; caressing kindnesses—loved, lingered over through a whole life, recalled with unfaded tenderness, and answering the call with undimmed shine, out of that raven cloud foreshadowing Death himself." No man can speak those consolations as can the preacher. The vision sustaining humanity's ideals and endeavors may draw from many springs; but the only stream by which its sorrows may be tranquillized to strength and patience is that which proceeds out of the throne of God. In Matthew Arnold's words, "The Cross still stands, and in the straits of the soul makes its ancient appeal." And life, bewildered, broken, lonely amid its memories and hysterical among its hopes, knows no figure as authentic as the spokesman of the Cross.



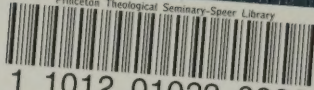








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